

The State of P-12 Education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky

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Commissioner of Education



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Kentucky
UNBRIDLED SPIRIT

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Fellow Kentuckians,

It's been a little more than a year since the release of the first State of Education Report, and what a year it has been!



At the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), we have continued to push forward on improving education for the 650,000 children across the Commonwealth who attend public schools. In the past year we've concentrated on three pillars – equity, achievement and integrity. Each of these pillars is crucial to the work we do and none can be taken for granted. But after a full year in my role as commissioner, it is becoming clear that equity needs to be a special focus for the state and the lens through which we consider all things moving forward.

While we have made steady progress on traditional measures of education success, the difference in performance among the various student groups in our schools is still too wide. A special Kentucky Department of Education research analysis, *A Focus on Equity for All*, shows that despite our top 10 graduation rate and drastic improvement in the college/career-readiness rate, too many students are not adequately prepared for the rigors of college or the workplace. *(See more about the analysis starting on page 5.)*

Staying with the status quo is not good enough for the Commonwealth. We need a system of public education that will generate better outcomes for **all** of our students and will support economic development in Kentucky.

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides us an opportunity to build on our successes, meaningfully address our shortcomings and raise **all** students to higher levels of achievement and postsecondary readiness. So in the past year, we've been developing a new accountability system that will be a catalyst for reaching those goals.

Last spring, we heard from thousands of Kentuckians at Town Hall Meetings who said they wanted a system that promoted education of the whole child, greater equity and didn't place so much emphasis on test scores. Guided by that input and the requirements of the federal ESSA law, hundreds of Kentuckians – administrators and teachers from all levels, subject areas and district sizes across the state; education partners; parents; community members; and the business community – have drafted a new accountability system that reflects Kentucky values and provides more clarity and transparency on school performance that can be the basis for improvement. *(See an overview of the accountability system starting on page 9.)*

The system under development will hold schools – and all of us – accountable for ensuring equity. Schools will be tasked with moving **all** children's academic achievement forward every year, but they will be expected to move children who fall into one of the traditionally low-performing student groups forward faster to help shrink the achievement gap. The system is one of continuous improvement and is designed to ensure **all** students have access to rich learning opportunities, regardless of the student's zip code, school assignment, family income, language, disability, the student's nationality or skin color.

Change can be difficult, but it is also necessary. There are many great things going on in education across Kentucky and we will continue to celebrate those and build on our successes. But we also must face our challenges head-on with determination, humility and perseverance. I hope you will join me in this critical work. Our ultimate goal is to provide each and every child with an excellent, world-class education that will lead the student to success in his or her postsecondary endeavors, in the job market and in life. I speak not only for

myself, but also the Kentucky Board of Education and KDE staff in saying that all of us are committed to supporting schools and districts to eliminate inequities and provide the excellent education that ***all*** of our students need and deserve.

This report is meant to shine a light on both the achievements and challenges of public education in Kentucky. Yet, our focus is on the future. As we move forward in the weeks and months ahead, we must put away the ideas of what we have always done and focus on equity, access to quality programs for all students and making decisions that are in their best interest.

After all, it is both Our Children and Our Commonwealth that benefit from a world-class system of public education in Kentucky.



Stephen L. Pruitt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education



A Focus on Equity for All Students

In Kentucky, we have a solid legacy of school improvement, having risen from the cellar to about the middle in performance among states, and even into the top ten on several measures.

However, we need to be honest about our challenges, and make decisions that are focused on benefitting children. This is critical because for all our academic gains, we have fallen short when it comes to addressing disparities in learning among different groups of students. Far too many children are not getting the education they need and deserve to be successful in life. They are not given the opportunities to learn, to succeed, to challenge themselves, and to access innovative courses and rigorous course work.



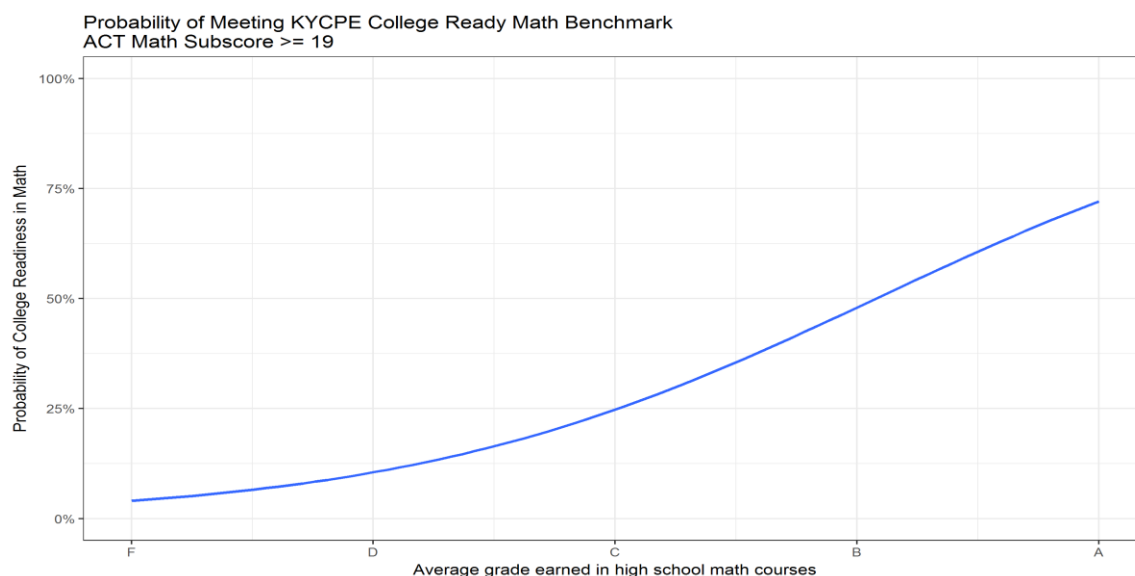
This disparity is called the achievement gap and, despite decades of well-meaning efforts aimed at closing these academic divides, it has not closed significantly in Kentucky or in any state.

Addressing the achievement gap is – and its root causes of opportunity, access and low expectations – must be our leading priority in the years ahead. This is not only a matter of critical importance to the lives of students and their families; it is key to ensuring the economic growth and prosperity of Kentucky.

Different groups of students have made gains in Kentucky over the past several decades with successful efforts and reforms. However, gaps remain and are clear in our student achievement numbers.

Grades are an important component when reflecting on opportunity and access for all students since they signal the level of skill development a student has achieved. It would be expected that students with grades in the D and F range would stand lower chances of meeting academic readiness standards on state assessments, and that students with grades in the A, B and C range would stand higher chances of meeting readiness benchmarks.

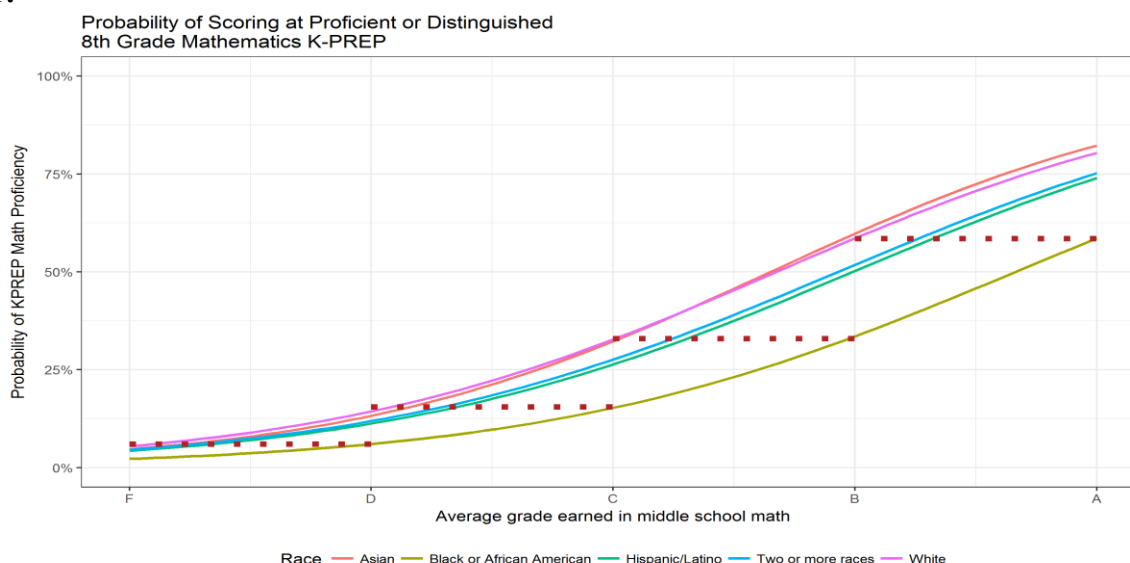
However, a Kentucky Department of Education analysis that examined student math performance during middle school and high school from 2012 to 2016, indicates that **even students with the best grades are falling short in reaching Kentucky college readiness standards** in math. The graph below demonstrates a student's chances of scoring proficient given his/her average math grade in high school. Students who earned an average letter grade of an A in high school math had on average only about a 75 percent chance of reaching the Council on Postsecondary Education's benchmark score of 19 on the math portion of the ACT. Students earning a C have only about a 25 percent chance of meeting the benchmark.



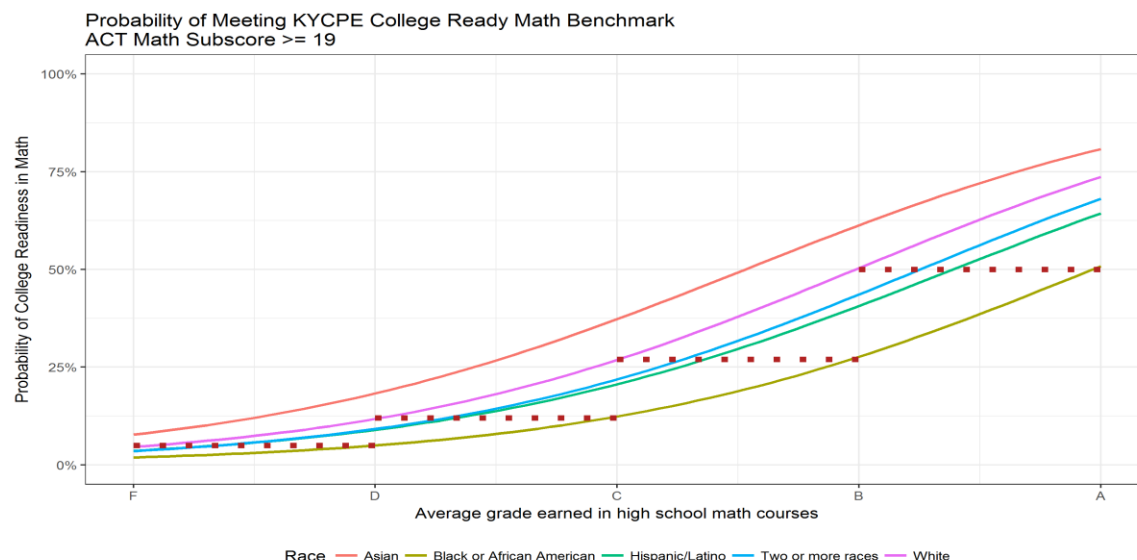
Furthermore, **substantial inequities exist between different groups of students when it comes to reaching those standards.** Specifically, African American and low-income students have substantially lower chances of scoring proficient on state assessments or meeting the math benchmark than their white or wealthier peers who earned the same average letter grade in their math courses. (Achieving that benchmark allows students to enter credit-bearing courses in college without taking non-credit bearing remedial courses). These differences point to barriers for African American and low-income students in accessing rigorous instructional experiences in math.

Specifically, the analysis found:

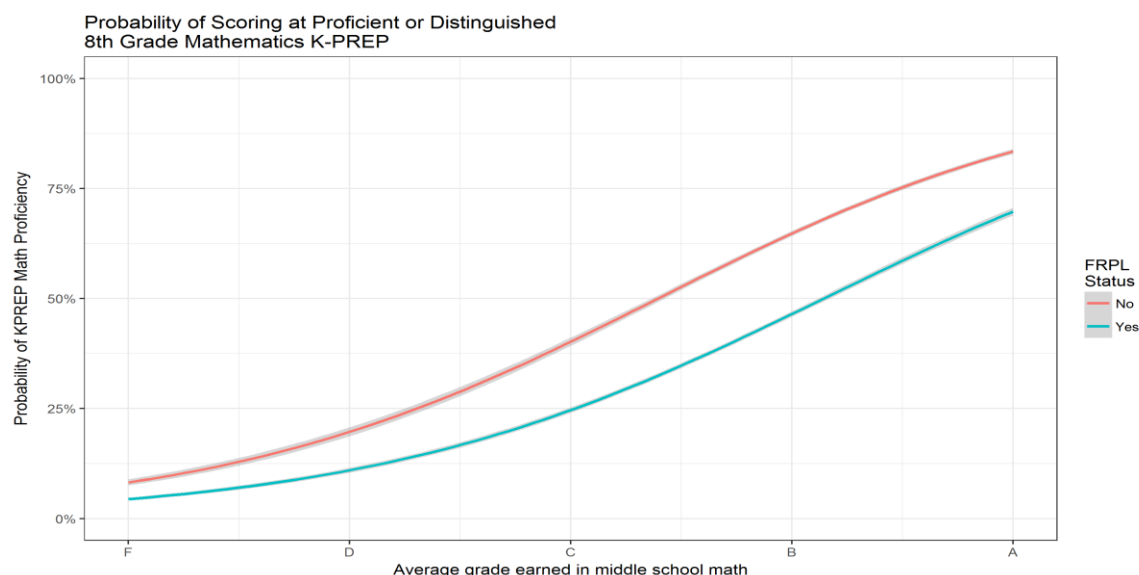
- In middle school, African American students had a lower chance of achieving proficiency on the math section of state assessments than their white counterparts – even when they earned the same average grade in their middle school math courses. For African American students whose average letter grade in their middle school math courses was an A, the chance of scoring proficient on state math tests was 25 percentage points lower than that of white students who also earned an A average (as indicated on the graph below). In fact, for every letter grade category, **an African American student’s chance of scoring proficient in math was the same as that of a white student who earned the next grade lower.**



- The gap between white and African American students persists into high school. **African American students had lower chances of meeting the Kentucky math benchmark on the ACT than white students who earned the same average letter grade in high school math courses.** As seen in the following graph, the gap is similar to that in middle school. For an African American student, the chance of reaching benchmark was 20 percentage points lower than that of his/her peers who earned the same average math grade.



- Additionally, a gap between male and female students develops in high school across all letter grade categories with female students facing lower chances of meeting the ACT benchmark than their male counterparts who earned the same average letter grade. However, the impact of gender is smaller in magnitude than that of race or income. As an example, female students who earned an average letter grade of an A in their high school math courses had a chance of meeting the Kentucky math benchmark that was six percentage points lower than male students who earned the same average letter grade.
- Family income level also was found to be a factor in determining different chances of meeting math readiness benchmarks in both middle school and high school for students earning the same average letter grade in their middle and high school math courses. As seen in the graph below, across all letter grade categories, low income students were shown to have a lower chance of scoring proficient on state assessments than their wealthier peers. For low-income students who earned an average letter grade of an A in their middle school math courses, the chance of scoring proficient was about 12 percentage points lower than that of their wealthier peers. The same effect was found in high school for a low-income student's chance of meeting the Kentucky ACT benchmark compared to his/her wealthier peer.



- **A gap also exists between African American and white students in accessing AP math courses during high school. During the 2015-16 school year, 1,461 students or 4.1 percent of white students took at least one AP math course during their 9th, 10th or 11th grade years, whereas only 62 or 1.4 percent of African American students took an AP math course.** While these numbers do not include the students' senior year course enrollment, which is a time when many students are likely to take AP courses, the difference of almost three percentage points indicates African American students do not have the same opportunity to access rigorous math coursework as their white peers.

What is the takeaway from these results?

First, they show that from 2012-16, there was a distinct difference between the grades and achievement level in math for African American and low-income students compared to those of white and wealthier students. This suggests that **grades of African American and low-income students did not signal the same level of achievement in middle and high school math as those of their white or wealthier peers** during the time period of the study. Rather, there appears to be a disconnect between the expected math achievement of African American and low-income students and the rigorous instructional experience necessary to ensure proficiency in math.

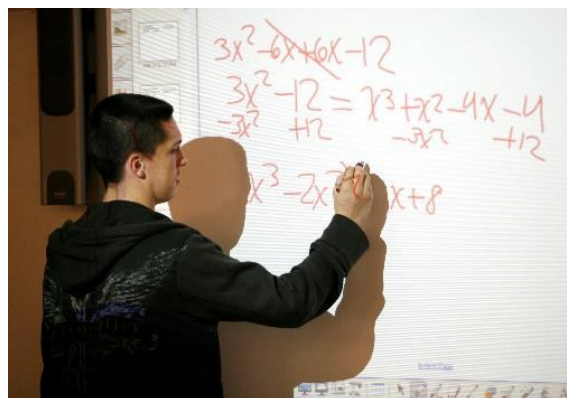


Second, the evidence also points to challenges for African American and low-income students in gaining access to educational opportunity equal to that of their white and wealthier peers. **One possible explanation for the difference in grading patterns is that the coursework provided to African American and low-income students was not as rigorous as that of their white or wealthier peers.** While African American and low-income students may see high achievement within such an instructional environment and earn higher grades, their academic growth is stunted due to a less robust instructional program.

An alternative explanation is that teacher and school leader expectations for African American and low-income students were lower than expectations for white or wealthier students. While curriculum and instruction may be rigorous and equal to that of white or wealthy students, lower expectations could lead to inflated grades that inaccurately reflect student achievement as compared to white and wealthier students.

Kentucky is not providing all our students with the same curriculum or not holding all students to the same level of performance.

Kentucky cannot let this disparity continue, whether it be lack of opportunity, access or low expectations. If students are not given a chance to test their limits, then they will never be able to reach their full potential.



A New Era of Accountability

An Overview of Kentucky's Accountability System Under Development

Kentucky has been a bold leader among states when it comes to addressing long-standing educational challenges. We have always looked to our values to guide us and reached beyond what others have done in order to do what is best for our children and our Commonwealth.

Kentucky is poised once again to become a model for other states with an innovative accountability system under development that takes unflinching aim at the achievement gap and looks beyond tests to drive change.

The purpose of the state's accountability system is to increase student outcomes and the percentages of students who:

- Have a well-rounded educational foundation, including the arts, music, health, core academic subjects, and personal and social skills that support success in school and professions (e.g., reliability, adaptability, working well with others, and ability to apply knowledge and skills in practical, real-world situations)
- Possess high levels of knowledge and skills in key content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies, as evidenced by scores of Proficient or higher on the state subject matter tests
- Demonstrate readiness to transition to the next level of education (elementary to middle or middle to high school) and to the postsecondary option of the student's choice, as evidenced by strong, appropriate coursework and external recognition of academic and professional knowledge and skills, and actual engagement in postsecondary education and/or work after leaving high school

When the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in December 2015, it presented an opportunity for Kentucky to revise and improve its public school accountability system.

In spring 2016, the Kentucky Department of Education sponsored a series of Town Hall Meetings across the state to outline the current system, explain the requirements under ESSA and solicit input for what the public values in its schools and should be reflected in the new system. Several overarching themes emerged:

- Our children must be at the heart of the system.
- A well-rounded education is important and necessary.
- All subjects, both tested and non-tested, need to be valued.
- Access and opportunity for students are critical.
- An emphasis on teaching is needed.
- Collaboration instead of competition among schools and districts needs to be the focus.



System Development

In June 2016, Commissioner Stephen Pruitt named an Accountability Steering Committee to guide the overall work. At its first meeting he told the committee, “This work is about 650,000 young people sitting in classrooms across the state and making sure they get the best education possible. We have to get out of a mentality of compliance with accountability and focus on quality, if we want to make progress on closing achievement and opportunity gaps and make the gains we need for the benefit of our children. Every one of them needs to be prepared to pursue college, postsecondary training, military service or a job upon high school graduation.”

The Accountability Steering Committee, which is comprised of teachers, principals, superintendents, representatives from higher education, teacher preparation and certification, parents, business and community leaders, agreed on several principles to guide its work in developing a new accountability system:

- The system should focus on the welfare of all students and promote good decision making for their benefit.
- The system should promote a holistic and quality education for all students.
- The system should reflect the Kentucky Department of Education's guiding principles of equity, achievement and integrity.
- The system should be simple and easy to understand.
- Data should be reported in a dashboard that better illustrates school/district progress or deficits than a single number.



Subsequently, Commissioner Pruitt named work groups, each chaired by a local superintendent and comprised of education practitioners from throughout the state – representing various grade levels, content areas and student groups, classroom teachers and administrators – parents, business and community interests – to look at Assessment, College/Career-Readiness, Educational Innovations, Opportunity and Access, and School Improvement. The work groups put forth recommendations to the Systems Integration Committee on how the system should work and what it should include.

A Systems Integration Committee looked at both the individual components and measurements and how the system works together as a whole and made recommendations to the Steering Committee. A Consequential Review Committee looked at unintended consequences that could result and discussed how districts might manipulate the system to improve their accountability classification. A Regulatory Review Committee is in the process of evaluating the proposed system for congruence to federal and state law. **Approximately 3,500 Kentuckians have participated in the process to date.**



The System Under Development

While the focus is on students, schools and districts are held accountable for supporting the student through various indicators and measures at each level. **Under the new system, accountability would be based on multiple academic and school quality measures, not only on a single high stakes test or indicator.**

An overall rating will be determined by student and school performance on five indicators (Proficiency, Growth, Achievement Gap, Transition Readiness and Opportunity and Access) and associated measures. On

the measures, a performance level of High, Medium or Low will be assigned based on cut scores for each, which are to be determined through a standards setting process. **Some measures contribute to a school's/district's overall accountability rating; others are reported only.**

Schools/districts will receive an overall rating of **Outstanding, Excellent, Good, Fair, Concern or Intervention**. Additionally, a school can be noted for having small achievement gaps or a large achievement gap for one or more student groups.

System Features (as currently recommended)

Several features of the accountability system, as currently recommended, are similar to previous systems. Some features, including local district options, are new and unique.



- **Proficiency remains a key indicator.** There is a new focus on English acquisition by English language learners.
- **The way student growth is measured has changed.** At the elementary and middle school levels, growth will be based on each individual student's progress toward proficiency measured against the student's annual personal target for improvement and the school's work to support the student to catch up, keep up and move up.
- **Achievement gap is evaluated and reported differently** to provide more transparency and take into consideration schools with very low numbers of students in certain groups.

- As part of the Transition Readiness indicator, there is **an emphasis on the development of essential skills and characteristics needed for postsecondary and workplace success**, as identified by Kentucky employers and postsecondary partners. For a student to be considered transition ready, he/she must acquire at least foundational essential skills – dispositions such as reliability, adaptability, working well with others, and a strong academic knowledge. Additionally, the state is developing an optional **Kentucky PLUS designation, which would provide a variety of opportunities for students to earn additional credentials and recognition including a work ethics certification.** The certification would be tiered and attainment would be reflected as a bronze, silver or gold seal on a student's diploma. This information would be reported for each school/district, but would not be included in accountability.
- For the first time, **the proposed system includes an indicator to ensure every student has equitable opportunity and access to standards, content, programs, quality educators, and educational experiences** that support and lead to student success. The measures vary by grade level. Some measures are reported, while some are rated meaning they figure into a school's accountability rating. Examples include:
 - chronic absenteeism and percentage of out-of-school suspensions (reported only); and
 - whether students have opportunity and access to a library media specialist and guidance counselor, a certified teacher in every subject, the percentage of teacher turnover and percentage of first year teachers (all reported only).



Rated measures which figure into a school rating include whether students have access and opportunity to standards-based content beyond those required for annual testing such as in the visual and performing arts, health and PE, science, social studies, career studies/practical living and specialized career pathways at high school (including those in the high-demand sectors).

Additional measures will focus on whether there is disproportionality in student access to things like gifted and talented services or advanced coursework such as AP classes (reported only).

- In an effort to encourage collaboration rather than competition, **how a school's overall rating is determined has changed.** Rather than points being assigned, and some indicators weighted to determine an overall score (from which schools are often ranked) and rating, school performance will be charted on a matrix of the indicators to determine the overall rating. Measures that contribute to a school's accountability rating as well as those that do not will be publicly reported.

- Focus and Priority School labels will no longer exist. Instead, **schools in need of additional help will be identified as those needing targeted support and intervention or those needing comprehensive support and improvement.**

Proposed Overall rating *minimum* requirements by indicator:

Overall Rating	Proficiency and Growth (EL/MS) Proficiency and Transition (HS) ¹	Transition Readiness (EL/MS)	Opportunity and Access	Achievement Gap Closure
Outstanding	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong	Very Strong Gap Closure Designation
Excellent	Very Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong Gap Closure Designation
Good	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong Gap Closure Designation
Fair	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low Gap Issue Designation
Concern	Low	Low	Low	Very Low Gap Issue Designation
Intervention	Graduation Rate under 80% OR Bottom 5% in performance OR Did not exit Tier II Targeted Support after 3 years			



- Student group reporting has expanded with ESSA to include students who are homeless, in foster care and military connected (students with at least one parent in active military), in addition to reporting by gender, migrant status, race/ethnicity (White, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaska Native, 2 or more), free/reduced price meal eligible, students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and English language learners.

- All information will be reported online, by student population group when possible, to present a transparent and broader picture of school and district performance. Individual student reports will still be issued.**

Competency-based Education and Assessment Pilot

It should be noted that the proposed accountability system is flexible and may include different types of assessments and includes the potential for expansion with an optional competency-based education and assessment pilot. This would utilize the strong connection among curriculum, instruction and assessment and promote personalized learning and flexibility at the district level. At the core of competency-based assessment is a commitment to ensure students master standards. Locally, state content standards are grouped into competencies and students demonstrate mastery of those competencies by gathering evidence coordinated with their instruction when the individual student is ready rather than during a standardized testing window.

The evidence of mastery may be drawn from a variety of sources, including assessments devised by the teacher or district, performance-based experiences, a statewide digital assessment bank, apprenticeships and other real-world experiences. During the pilot, the district's assessment system can create credibility and evaluate soundness by having students take both state assessments and demonstrate mastery locally. Once technical stability is achieved, data from the competency-based system may replace data from state-administered assessments and measures and be included in the state accountability system as evidence of student proficiency.



Kentucky Accountability System at a Glance

Indicators (Not all are Equal)	Elementary Measures	Middle School Measures	High School Measures
Proficiency <i>Defined as reaching the desired level of knowledge and skill as measured on academic assessments.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Student performance on state tests in reading, mathematics, science, social studies and writingEnglish learners student group’s progress on an English proficiency assessment		
Growth (EL/MS) <i>Defined as a student’s continuous improvement toward the goal of proficiency.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Percentage of students who meet annual personal target for improvement based on individual student trajectory toward proficiency		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Growth not calculated at the high school level because only a single assessment is administered per subject
Transition Readiness <i>Defined as a student’s attainment of the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to successfully transition to the next level of his or her education career.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Foundational learning in non-tested subjects; various career fields; essential skills (specific measures under development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continued exploration of non-academic subjects; career fields; demonstration of essential skills (specific measures under development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5-year adjusted cohort graduation rateFoundational essential skills AND one of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Academic-ready – meet benchmarks on college entrance exam OR dual credit ORTechnical-ready – meet benchmarks on KOSSA OR earn Industry Certificate OR dual credit ORMilitary-ready – meet benchmark on ASVAB
Achievement Gap <i>Defined as the disparity in performance between student groups with a goal of reducing or closing the gap by moving all students to higher levels and moving those at the lowest levels more rapidly.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduction in percentage of students scoring below Proficient (Novice and Apprentice) in each tested subject reported by group<ul style="list-style-type: none">White, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaska Native, multiple race/ethnicity, F/R-meal eligible, students with IEP, EL students and consolidated student groupNon-duplicated consolidated student group includes same groups as above excluding White, Asian and F/R-meal eligible students in each tested subject to include student groups whose populations are too small to otherwise be reported – include in school ratingDisplay the difference between student groups’ performance in each subject – reported only		
Opportunity and Access <i>Defined as the equitable availability to research-based student experiences and school factors that impact student success.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Various Student Measures; Content/Standards/Program Measures; Policy Measures; Practitioner Measures (differing by grade level) of school quality and student success in the categories of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whole child supportsEquitable access		
Overall School Rating <i>Based on strength of performance on school-level measures and indicators.</i>	Outstanding	Gap Closure – supplemental designation for closing the differences in achievement between students in historically lower-performing groups and students in historically higher-performing groups within the school	
	Excellent		
	Good	Gap Issue – supplemental designation for schools with very large achievement gap and low-performing students	
	Fair		
	Concern		
		Intervention	
School Improvement and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Targeted – school with low-performing or consistently underperforming student group(s)Comprehensive – bottom 5% of schools OR less than 80% grad rate OR chronically low-performing student group(s)		

Identifying Schools for Support and Exit Criteria

Proposed Entrance/Exit Criteria

	Targeted Support and Improvement	Comprehensive Support and Improvement
Entrance	<p>A school will be identified for Targeted Support if it meets the following criteria:</p> <p><u>Tier I Targeted Support (Early Warning) – Consistently Underperforming Student Groups:</u>¹ One or more student groups performing as poorly as <u>all students</u> in any of the lowest performing 10% of Title I schools or non-Title I schools (by level – elementary, middle or high school) based on school performance, for two consecutive years (identified annually, beginning 2019-20).</p> <p><u>Tier II Targeted Support (Low Performance) – Low-performing Student Group(s):</u>¹ One or more student groups performing as poorly as all students in any lowest performing 5% of Title I schools or non-Title I schools (by level – elementary, middle or high school) based on school performance (identified every 3 years beginning 2018-19).</p>	<p>A school will be identified for Comprehensive Support if it meets any one of the following categories:</p> <p>(1) Bottom 5% of Title I or non-Title I schools (by level – elementary, middle or high school);</p> <p>OR</p> <p>(2) Less than 80% graduation rate for Title I or non-Title I high schools;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>(3) Title I or non-Title I schools previously identified for Tier II Targeted Support for at least 3 years and have not exited.</p>
Exit	<p>A school under:</p> <p><u>Tier I Targeted Support: Consistently Underperforming Student Groups:</u>¹ <i>Districts determine exit criteria but at minimum must reflect the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools will exit when the specified student group(s) move(s) above the performance of all students in the bottom 10% of Title I schools or non-Title I schools in comprehensive support and intervention. <p><u>Tier II Targeted Support: Low-performing Student Group(s):</u>¹ Schools will exit when the specific targeted subgroup(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - move(s) above the performance of all students in the bottom 5% of Title I schools or non-Title I schools in comprehensive support and intervention. 	<p>A school under Comprehensive Support will exit upon achieving:</p> <p>(1) Performance above the bottom 5% of Title I schools or non-Title I schools;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>(2) A graduation rate above 80% for Title I or non-Title I high schools;</p> <p>OR</p> <p>(3) All student group(s) performance is above all students in any of the lowest 5% of Title I or non-Title I schools.</p>
<p>¹Rather than subgroup, which is the language used in the ESSA statute, Kentucky prefers the term student group. Both terms are defined as each major racial and ethnic group (including White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander); economically disadvantaged students; children with disabilities; and English learners.</p> <p>The process of identifying schools for various levels and types of support, and the extent of the support will be described in a separate document. The types of school support will draw on research and extensive experience by the Kentucky Department of Education and others. The breadth, depth, and intensity of school support will depend in large part on the available resources.</p>		

Next Steps

Based on feedback from the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE), department staff will continue working out details of the system and begin modeling the proposed system using existing data. This modeling will inform decisions about the data calculations behind the system and assist in ensuring the validity of proposed measures. Several work groups and committees will continue to provide feedback to the development work.

Commissioner Pruitt will continue to engage shareholders in the process and plans on seeking widespread public feedback on the proposed system both online and through town hall meetings starting in March 2017.

The KBE must approve the final system and will have more conversations in April.

The current timeline calls for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to submit its plan for accountability to the United States Department of Education by September 18, 2017. The proposed system aligns with the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. If approved, 2017-18 would be a transition year; schools and districts may be held accountable under the new system for the first time in the 2018-19 school year.

More details on the proposed accountability system, as currently proposed, may be accessed on the KDE website: http://bit.ly/KyAccountabilitySys_Draft.





2016 Year in Review

The Kentucky Board of Education

The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 created an independent governance structure for public education. The governor appoints members of the Kentucky Board of Education.

In 2016, Governor Matt Bevin appointed five new members to the Kentucky Board of Education:

- Ben Cundiff, Cadiz, a chemical engineer and an attorney
- Gary Houchens, Bowling Green, an associate professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Leadership and Research at Western Kentucky University
- Alesa Johnson, Somerset, an electrical engineer and associate dean for Workforce Solutions at Somerset Community College
- Rich Gimmel, chair of Atlas Machine and Supply, Inc., Louisville
- Milton Seymore, Louisville, who is retired from Ford Motor Company and currently serves as pastor of Energized Baptist Church.

In August 2016, the board unanimously elected Bill Twyman as board chair and Mary Gwen Wheeler as the vice chair. Twyman is the first African American chair since the board was reconstituted under the Kentucky Education Reform Act in 1990.



Kentucky Board of Education Members

(From left) Roger L. Marcum, Supreme Court District 3; Rich Gimmel, At-Large; William Twyman, Chair, Supreme Court District 2; Mary Gwen Wheeler, Vice-Chair, Supreme Court District 4; Gary Houchens, At-Large; Alesa Johnson, At-Large; Ben Cundiff, Supreme Court District 1; Nawanna Barton Privett, Supreme Court District 5; Milton C. Seymore, At-Large, Samuel D. Hinkle, Supreme Court District 6; Grayson Boyd, Supreme Court District 7. Ex-officio Member, Robert King, President, Council on Postsecondary Education, not pictured

The Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) develops and adopts the regulations that govern Kentucky's public school districts (KDE); the actions of the Kentucky Department of Education including management of 53 Area Technology Centers, the Kentucky School for the Blind, and the Kentucky School for the Deaf; interscholastic athletics; and community education programs and services. The board reviews the department's budget requests and makes recommendations to the governor and legislature.

In 2016, the board started revamping its strategic plan to more closely reflect its newly adopted vision and state goals that each and every student is academically prepared and transition ready for the next level:

- Ready by the end of Grade 3
- Ready for Middle School
- Ready for High School
- Ready for Success

“Each and every student empowered and equipped with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to pursue a successful future.”

*Kentucky Board of Education
Vision statement
August 2016*

Charter Schools

In the latter part of 2016, the board turned its attention to charter schools. Charters are public schools in which an authorizer and charter operator enter into a performance-based contract, or charter, that spells out the school's governance, funding, accountability and flexibility, among other things. Currently, Kentucky is one of seven states that does not offer charter schools.

With the increased likelihood that the 2017 General Assembly would consider charter school legislation, the Kentucky Board of Education approved a framework for charter schools at its December meeting.

While the board did not vote to support charter schools, it did advance a list of best practices it hopes the legislature will consider if it moves forward with charter legislation. Board members said they were open to these principles because of the possibility to advance student learning yet at the same time wanted to minimize negative consequences with regard to public schools. Among the other principles for charter schools, to which the board agreed:

- Local boards of education should be the authorizers of charter schools. The KBE recognizes that authorizers are the driver of quality and quality is most important for students. If multiple authorizers are allowed, the number of authorizers should be capped and limited to nonsectarian; nonprofit organizations; local governments and universities.
- The Kentucky Board of Education should be the final arbiter for approving conflicts and providing oversight of the state charter initiative.
- Charter school applicants and providers must be non-profit, nonsectarian and cannot be wholly or partially governed by a group that is a religious denomination or affiliation.
- Authorizers should focus on approving applications that target at-risk and/or under-served populations of students while also demonstrating the capability and competence of the applicant to execute its vision.
- A charter school application must demonstrate support from local parents and the community. If an applicant is rejected, an appeal process should be handled by the Kentucky Board of Education.
- Conversion charters should be restricted to low-performing schools.
- Kentucky certification is to be required for teachers in charter schools.

- A charter school should be available to any parent/guardian in the district, or in a defined region for a regional charter school, who wishes to enroll their child. Students cannot be excluded due to a disability or any other characteristic. If the number of students exceed space, a free and fair lottery should be held to determine enrollment.
- Charter schools should be held to the same assessment and accountability standards as other public schools as well as the academic progress goals set forth in the charter contract with the authorizer.
- Charter schools should receive an exemption from state and local laws/regulations excluding regulations regarding accountability, health, safety, civil rights, employee background checks, open meetings, the Freedom of Information Act requests, and accounting practices.
- Charter schools should be required to provide special education evaluation and services just like other public schools.
- There should be fair and equitable funding for all schools and funding for charter schools should not detrimentally impact the funding provided to other public schools in a district. Charter schools should have access to capital funding and public facilities.
- Charter schools should have access to transportation funding. The state also should incentivize collaboration between districts and charters to promote the safe and efficient transportation of students.



The Commissioner of Education

The Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) is responsible for hiring a commissioner.

Since October 2015, Stephen Pruitt has served as the Kentucky Commissioner of Education. The commissioner of education oversees the daily operations of the KDE and recommends and implements KBE policies.



Pruitt

The KDE provides support to locally operated public school districts focused on educating children in elementary, middle and high schools throughout the Commonwealth. Together, the KBE, the commissioner and KDE are responsible for setting local school district standards for student, program, and operational performance while respecting the local autonomy of each school district. Budget and policy priorities are tied to the strategic goals developed by the KBE and the KDE. Revisions to the department's goals and strategic plan is underway.

In 2016, Pruitt took steps to rebrand the department and what it stands for under his leadership. In unveiling the department's new logo, Pruitt said it reflects a commitment to equity, achievement and integrity for all students.



Among the various ideas represented in the logo are:

- A focus on all children and ensuring that each has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential.
- Transparency and being open and honest about the work
- Continuous improvement
- Unity and collaboration – working together to build a public education system that is second to none.

The idea of a shared responsibility to improve education in Kentucky also is reflected in the department's new motto, "Our Children, Our Commonwealth."

During his first year on the job, Pruitt sought to build relationships with superintendents, principals, teachers, partner organizations, co-op directors, lawmakers (both state and national), executive branch leadership, community groups and representatives from business and industry.

As Congress considered proposed regulations to guide implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, Pruitt testified before the Senate Health, Education and Pensions Committee as well as the House Committee on Education and the Workforce to lobby for more flexibility among states and a more realistic timeline for implementation than proposed. Federal officials conceded on the issue of timeline.

However, Congress recently put the United States Department of Education's proposed regulations for ESSA State Plans and Accountability, and Title II Teacher Preparation on hold. Members will likely move to repeal these regulations under the Congressional Review Act (CRA). However, the Secretary of Education has communicated that it is important for states to continue moving forward with their plans and Kentucky is doing so.



In the past year, Dr. Pruitt collaborated frequently with his many advisory groups and sought members' input on a wide variety of topics. The groups are made up of constituent groups:

- superintendents
- principals
- teachers
- students
- parents
- local school board members



The commissioner also has called groups together that incorporate many if not all of the above roles that focus on a single topic such as the:

- Accountability Steering Committee and work groups
- Program Review Task Force
- Dyslexia Task Force
- Educator Diversity Task Force

The commissioner and/or his staff participate in a number of other panels mandated in statute or regulation that provide feedback or guidance on issues of educational importance.



- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Committee
- Committee on Mathematics Achievement (CMA)
- Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Gifted Advisory Council
- Kentucky Community Education State Advisory Council
- Local Superintendents Advisory Council (LSAC)
- Read to Achieve Steering Committee
- School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC)
- State Advisory Panel on Exceptional Children (SAPEC)
- State Textbook Commission
- Testing Board of Review
- Writing Program Advisory Committee

In 2016, a consistent topic among the groups was the vision for public education in Kentucky. This also served as the focus of the first in a series of Town Hall Meetings held in Kentucky in the spring of 2016 as the commissioner sought public input from a variety of shareholders on what they valued in Kentucky schools. The comments gathered served as a starting point in the development of a new accountability system under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

For the second year, the commissioner extended an invitation to the Kentucky Teacher of the Year for a sabbatical with KDE to observe and foster an understanding of the department's work and to serve as an ambassador for public education to teachers and the population at large. 2017 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Ron Skillern, an AP U.S. History teacher from Bowling Green High School (Bowling Green Independent), is fulfilling his sabbatical with the department in the spring semester of 2017.



Ron Skillern
2017 Kentucky Teacher
of the Year

In November 2016, his peers selected Commissioner Pruitt to serve on the Board of Directors for the Council of Chief State School Officers, the national organization of state leaders of P-12 education.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning is at the center of Kentucky public education. The instructional programs for Kentucky's public schools emphasize the development of students' abilities to acquire, apply and integrate knowledge, skills and understandings in real-life contexts and to problem solve, make decisions, and think critically and creatively. They assist students in connecting learning to the world beyond the classroom by exploring and investigating real issues and problems of communities, states, the nation, and the world.



Kentucky Academic Standards

In 2016, Kentucky stayed the course on its academic standards. Though a regular review of the English/language arts and mathematics standards had begun, and Commissioner Pruitt had announced his intent to supplement existing standards with standards on cursive writing and calculus, the department put its standards review and development process on hold after legislation was introduced in the General Assembly that could impact the review and development process moving forward. Pruitt felt the uncertainty over legislative direction could make moving forward an expensive

exercise in futility at a time that the state could not afford it. As soon as legislative direction is made clear, the commissioner has vowed to move ahead.

Assessments

To align with the science standards adopted by the Kentucky Board of Education in 2013, for the past several years, department staff and teachers have worked to design a new science assessment system. The system breaks away from the traditional approach to science testing and includes three components:

- *classroom embedded assessments* – day-to-day, minute-to-minute checks for understanding;
- *through course tasks* – periodic, common, formative checks on teaching and learning; and
- *statewide summative tests* – state standardized assessments that provide further evidence on teaching and learning.

Each of these components is essential to advancing teaching and learning, and each provides necessary information for particular users and purposes. Each component tells us how a student is learning, but collectively also provides information that can be used to improve individual student learning, instructional practice and entire school programs.

The Kentucky science assessment system is based on the clear, defined learning expectations included in *Kentucky's Academic Standards for Science*. A deliberate effort has been made to build the system on a foundation of what happens in every classroom every day.



This information helps teachers and schools to better understand and support student learning progress continuously over time and evolve teacher growth and effectiveness.

In spring 2016, the department piloted a 7th grade summative science assessment. Over the summer, master teachers designed both Through Course Tasks and Summative Item Clusters to use in a statewide field test of the system in the spring of 2017.



Course Code Alignment

State regulation requires local districts and schools to use uniform academic course codes, to classify all courses offered in each school when reporting to the Kentucky Department of Education using the statewide student information system.

The Kentucky Department of Education annually audits the use of uniform academic course codes by districts and schools. This has revealed wide disparity in the names of the courses taught, the academic standards taught and the rigors of the courses offered. For example, an Algebra I class in one school may be very different and

cover different content with a different depth of knowledge required than that of another school. So, the department has launched a comprehensive, systemic review of state course codes and their alignment with academic standards. When complete for both regular subjects as well as career and technical education courses, the standardization of course codes, names and content will better ensure students equitable access to learning throughout Kentucky and can be publicly reported as part of the state's new accountability system.

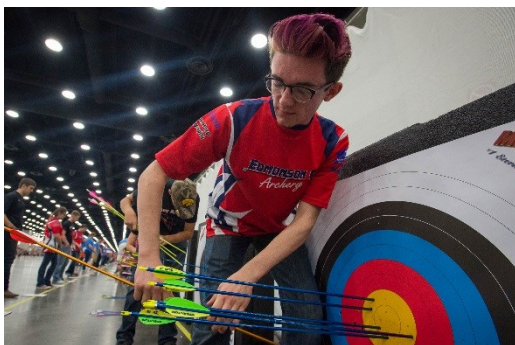
Program Reviews

A Program Review is a statutory requirement and is a systematic method of analyzing a school instructional program designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all students, provide equitable access to quality programs, and afford students a way to demonstrate learning beyond a paper and pencil test.

Program Reviews are conducted in arts and humanities, practical living/career studies, writing, K-3 programs and global competencies/world languages programs, which was included in accountability for high schools in the 2015-16 school year and for elementary and middle schools in 2016-17.



As part of Program Reviews, school personnel must evaluate instructional practices, aligned and enacted curriculum, student work samples, formative and summative assessments, professional development and support services, and administrative support and monitoring against standards of excellence. Through careful review, schools are able to identify strengths, weaknesses and potential areas of program growth. School leaders then use this information to plan for and implement program improvement.



In December 2015, Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt named a task force to study Program Reviews and consider solutions to address challenges related to the Program Review process. Membership on the task force included superintendents, principals, teachers and representatives from education shareholder groups in the state.

In the summer of 2016, the task force proposed some changes that resulted in a greatly streamlined Program Review process for the 2016-17 school year:

- rubrics were reduced from up to 56 pages to 8-10 pages
 - only two programs will be scored each year rather than every program
- the requirements for the submission of evidences, written rationales and next steps to the Kentucky Department of Education have been eliminated. Instead, the principal, school-based decision making council and superintendent will sign assurances ensuring support for continuously providing quality programs and to expand opportunities for all students.

Program Reviews will no longer be a part of accountability under the new system.

Early Education

Kindergarten Readiness



At the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, teachers administered the BRIGANCE K Screener to 46,582 students entering kindergarten in all 173 school districts. Students are asked their name and age, to recite the alphabet and count to 30, among other tasks. School readiness skills and behaviors are not used to determine school eligibility; all children who meet the legal age requirement are entitled to a public school education. School readiness is defined in 704 KAR 5:070 as “a student entering school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the student’s success.” The screener results indicated:

- Kentucky’s kindergarten readiness rate remained unchanged in 2016 at 50.1 percent of students entering kindergarten ready to learn.
- The results did show consistent growth for students enrolled in state-funded preschool and federal Head Start programs. Additionally, African American and Hispanic students and students with limited English proficiency also showed modest increases in school readiness.

Screener results allow teachers to meet each student where he or she is on the first day of school and determine how to best meet the child’s learning needs moving forward. When children start out behind their peers in kindergarten, the push to bring them up to grade level is urgent. The longer a child lags behind academically, the more difficulty he/she has succeeding in school.

Kentucky All STARS

All publicly funded programs that serve young children in Kentucky – including licensed child care programs, state-funded preschools and Head Start programs – are now included in Kentucky All STARS, Kentucky’s expanded tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS). Studies show that children who attend high quality early learning environments have better math, language and social skills.



Kentucky All STARS is based on Kentucky’s Early Childhood Standards and research-based indicators of quality. It recognizes programs that have made a commitment to continuous quality improvement. On the path toward higher quality, programs can benefit from supports including training, technical assistance and coaching.

In summer 2016, all state-funded preschools entered at a midrange with three stars from which they could work to improve and move up in the rating system. Already, several of Kentucky’s state-funded preschools have achieved the highest rating with 5 stars.

Preschool Partnership Grants

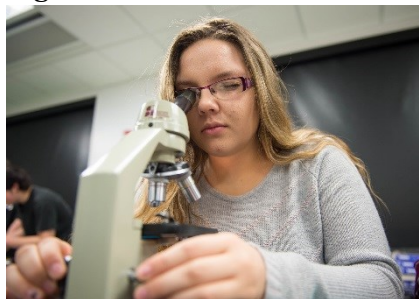


The Kentucky Preschool Partnership Grant is designed to incentivize cooperative public/private partnerships between public school districts and child care providers to develop full-day, high-quality programs for at-risk children. The grants are used for the following purposes:

- Tier 1 Grants support partnership building and planning outcomes. School districts work with one or more child care partners to develop a formal plan to increase the availability of full-day, high-quality preschool services in their communities.
- Tier 2 Grants support implementing or enhancing the implementation of full-day, high-quality early childhood services for at-risk preschool children. School districts accomplish this goal in partnership with a Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) provider or providers.

In 2016, more than 70 grants totaling \$7.5 million have been awarded to create stronger early learning programs statewide.

Rigorous Coursework



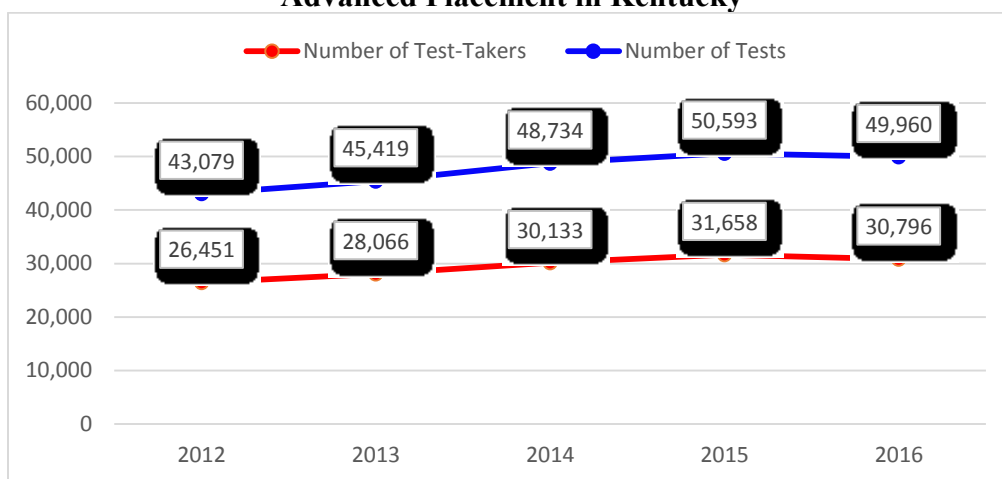
Advanced Placement (AP)

In recent years, Kentucky educators have worked diligently to expand access to, and participation in rigorous coursework such as Advanced Placement (AP) classes. The Advanced Placement program gives students the opportunity to pursue college-level coursework while still in high school.

There are more than 35 Advanced Placement courses, ranging from high-level math and science to fine arts, each of which connects directly to a wide variety of college majors and careers. The Advanced Placement program gives high school students the opportunity to earn college credit if they score well on a standardized end-of-course exam. Although it varies from school to school, most colleges require a minimum qualifying score of 3 on an AP exam to earn college credit for the course. It is estimated that taking AP courses and earning a qualifying score saves Kentucky students more than \$23 million a year in college costs.

According to data from the College Board, for the first time in recent years, both the number of test-takers and the number of AP tests given is down. It is thought that this may be due to the fee charged for the test. However, the number of students scoring at the top two levels is up between 4 and 5 percent from last year. *(See also AP student results under the K-12 Public Education Performance section of this report on page 32.)*

Advanced Placement in Kentucky

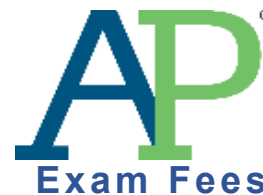


According to the College Board, the number of traditionally underrepresented minority students in Kentucky taking an AP exam increased 38 percent in the last year, in part thanks to AdvanceKentucky.

The AdvanceKentucky initiative, a partnership of the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation and the Kentucky Department of Education, is designed to expand access to, as well as participation and success in Advanced Placement classes, especially among those who are traditionally underrepresented, including minority and low-income students. AdvanceKentucky has served about 95,000 students in 109 Kentucky public high schools since its inception in 2008.

AP Fee Underwriting

In an effort to increase students' opportunity to take Advanced Placement exams, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is underwriting the cost of the tests in the 2016-17 school year for students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.



While KRS 160.348(3) requires costs of the AP exams to be paid by the KDE, state funding has not been available. In the past, the KDE worked to secure federal grants to pay the fees for private and public school students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL). Unfortunately, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) removes the grant provision (AP Test Fee Program) providing dedicated federal Title I funds for this purpose.

It is estimated that it will cost the department up to \$800,000, which is being reallocated from other areas, to underwrite the tests for qualifying students.

Without the department covering the fee, it would be up to districts to pay the \$53 test fee for students in poverty. While students from all backgrounds can benefit from taking challenging coursework in high school, data from 2016 shows that nationwide among African American, Hispanic and Native American students with the potential to succeed in AP courses, only about half enroll in this rigorous coursework.



Dual Credit Scholarships

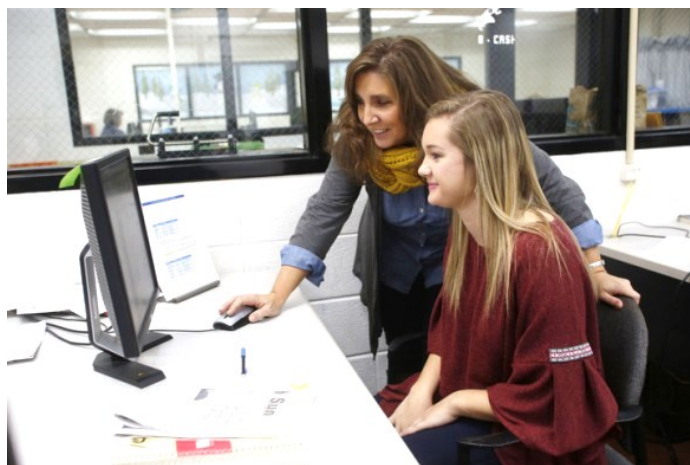
With dual credit, a student is enrolled in a course which allows him/her to earn high school credit and college credit simultaneously. The course may be taught on a college campus or on a high school campus, but it is coordinated in conjunction with a college or university.

On June 24, 2016, Executive Order 2016-378 established the Kentucky Dual Credit Scholarship Program, whereby high school students can earn up to 9 hours of college credit. Eligible dual credit courses include both general education classes and career and technical education courses in state-approved career pathways that lead to an industry-recognized credential. All of Kentucky's public colleges and universities, plus most of the state's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredited private postsecondary institutions participate in the Dual Credit Scholarship Program.

Preliminary data showed that 36.3 percent more high school students were enrolled in dual credit courses in the fall 2016 semester, compared to fall 2015 (22,707 vs. 16,659). Also, there was a 49.9 percent increase in the total number of courses taken (42,477 vs. 28,334).

While this opportunity existed in many school districts across the state, this opportunity is now available to all high school students across the Commonwealth and is paid for through proceeds from the Kentucky Lottery.

Additionally, the program establishes a dual credit tuition rate ceiling for all dual credit coursework at participating postsecondary institutions (PPI).



Education Workforce

Effective Teachers and Leaders



The most important factor in the achievement of our students is the effectiveness of the teachers and school leaders who serve them. Though hiring is done at the local level, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has taken a number of steps to recruit, train and retain effective teachers and leaders, many of them through partnerships and collaborations with other groups and institutions.

In 2016:

- An Educator Diversification Task Force was formed and is developing a strategic plan to guide the state's efforts to recruit, prepare and support a diverse education workforce for Kentucky's schools.
- Kentucky became an Educators Rising state affiliate and established a new education career pathway.
- The department worked with state teacher recruitment partners and Institutes of Higher Education to improve current recruitment and retention strategies, including the Minority Educator Recruitment and Retention Program, the Administrative Leadership Institute and the Counselors for the New Millennium program.

Leadership Networks

In 2016, the department facilitated the launch of Next Generation Leadership Networks in 20 districts. Each site is striving to coherently address a challenging problem of practice that will benefit teaching and learning across the district.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification

National Board Certification provides numerous benefits to teachers, students and schools. It was designed to develop, retain and recognize accomplished teachers and to generate ongoing improvement in schools nationwide. Kentucky's number of National Board Certified Teachers continues to rise. To date, 3,292 teachers in Kentucky have achieved National Board Certification; another 980 are pursuing certification.

The Kentucky Department of Education, the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) and the Kentucky Education Association (KEA) are partnering with the National Board to dramatically increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) across the state and place them in instructional leadership roles in high-need schools. KRS 161.131 set the goal of having one National Board Certified Teacher in every Kentucky school by 2020.



Professional Growth and Effectiveness System

The Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) was created with the idea that every student should be taught by an effective teacher and every school should be led by an effective principal. The goal is to create a fair and equitable system to measure teacher and leader effectiveness and act as a catalyst for professional growth.

PGES provides a common language and understanding of effective teaching statewide that didn't exist before. Teacher evaluations now are based on four common areas of practice:

- planning and preparation;
- classroom environment;
- instruction; and
- professional responsibilities.

PGES for teachers, other professionals, and principals is now in full implementation, statewide.



Sources of evidence voluntarily submitted in the Educator Development Suite (EDS) for 2015-16 and 2016-17 (see below) confirm that schools and districts are understanding and implementing PGES with technical accuracy.

Educator Development Suite Voluntary Reporting

School year	Summative Evaluations	Observations	Self-Reflection	Professional Growth Plans	Student Growth Goals
2015-16 total	27,624	111,705	22,551	28,531	31,406
2016-to date	In progress	26,100	19,277	24,127	26,524

As a result, efforts within the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) have shifted from providing technical assistance to providing support for educator development and growth that leads to more effective teaching. To that end, the new Principal Partnership Project provides field-based networking and mentoring opportunities for principals. The overall goal is to build their capacity to provide the kind of impactful feedback and support to teachers that directly increases their effectiveness in the classroom.

Teacher-based supports also have been developed and deployed, including a new peer observation training module through which teachers learn to collaborate by observing one another and discuss effective instruction as outlined in the *Kentucky Framework for Teaching*. To date, 25,835 peer observation cases have been completed. Assuming each teacher took four cases this means about 6,458 teachers have done the online peer observation training. Through completion of this training module, teachers have the opportunity not only to become more effective as peer observers, but also to initially certify or renew certification as peer observers for PGES.

Distributed leadership models and increasing the influence of teachers as leaders has been a primary focus in the last year. The creation of the *Teacher Leadership Framework* as well as supports for defining and developing educator career pathways have increased, especially through the work of the Division of Next Generation Professionals and the Instructional Transformation Project.

Education Technology



Technology supports teaching and learning in Kentucky's public school districts, the mission of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), the vision of the Kentucky Board of Education and the Digital Readiness initiative (<http://tinyurl.com/KY-K-12-Digital-Readiness>). The department's goal is to ensure that basic and equitable anytime, anywhere, always-on access to instructional and administrative education technology services is provided to students, teachers, administrators, parents and the general public. The Office of Education Technology supports technology

use for the Kentucky Department of Education, 53 Area Technology Centers, Kentucky School for the Blind, and Kentucky School for the Deaf, as well as all 173 school districts through nearly 100 major services.

In 2016, Wi-Fi availability increased by 20 percent in Kentucky K-12 schools and the overall internet usage by teachers and students increased by 70 percent, while working reliably 99.9 percent of the time. The agency also successfully transitioned the state's student information system to a cloud-based computing platform for the department and the majority of districts (the rest will follow) increasing access, efficiency and security, while lowering the annual costs to local school districts.

In the past year, the provision of technology resources, technology funding, and data governance, quality and security have been key areas of focus and will remain so in the upcoming year.

Virtual Learning

Kentucky was one of the first states in the country to launch a virtual school two decades ago with the Kentucky Virtual High School as the sole provider of approved online courses throughout the Commonwealth (formalized through a Governor's order in 1999). However, in 2012 as participation declined, KDE began a transition from a state model to a distributed model of online and virtual course options where Kentucky public schools and districts have invested ownership in new designs that are the right options for the students they serve.



This new design has seen participation rise in order to meet the changing needs of Kentucky students. Student participation in online courses has grown significantly. Based on data from Kentucky's student information system, in the 2015-16 school year, 157 school districts (91 percent) reported online course participation for over 31,000 students in grades 6-12 – an increase of more than 9,000 students over the previous school year.

Imagine Academy

Since its inception in the 2015-16 school year, Kentucky's K-12 Microsoft IT Academy, now known as the Imagine Academy, has seen tremendous growth. With 259 Kentucky high schools and area technology centers from 159 districts actively participating, students have completed 40,639 Microsoft courses and earned thousands of certifications that focus primarily on a wide variety of business and computer science skills:

- Professional Microsoft certifications obtained by Kentucky K-12 students - 13,755
- Professional Microsoft certifications obtained by Kentucky K-12 teachers - 742



Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP)

STLP focuses on technology, leadership, entrepreneurship, life skills and project-based learning for Kentucky students in elementary, middle and high school. STLP gives students of all ages the skills and confidence, to effectively compete against anyone else in Kentucky and around the nation. In the past two years, there has been a 40 percent increase in the number of Kentucky K-12 students competing in regional and state STLP competitions. Regarding STLP:

- more districts report STLP as a classroom integrated project rather than an "after school only" activity
- 139 districts, 718 schools and 55,000 students actively participate

Career and Technical Education (CTE)



Career and technical education is an essential component of high school course offerings. For many students, it represents as much as a third of their high school experience. It is critical in meeting the needs of students in academic achievement, career exploration, career preparation, and leadership development.

Successful transition to postsecondary education, work, or the military is one of the goals of Kentucky's educational system.

New Skills for Youth Grant

In spring 2016, JPMorgan Chase and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) awarded Kentucky a \$100,000 grant as part of the first phase of the New Skills for Youth Initiative for planning and early implementation of long-term career readiness education programs that align with the needs of Kentucky employers.



In the second phase of the initiative, Kentucky was granted \$2 million to strengthen and expand career education pathways for students. This will allow the state to dramatically increase opportunities for Kentucky students to complete rigorous and relevant career and technical education programs and earn industry-recognized credentials that will prepare them for postsecondary success and high-skill, high-demand jobs in Kentucky. The state will use the funds to incentivize school districts to create regional career academies that are aligned to high-demand careers and that will involve collaboration among K12, postsecondary education and employers.

Kentucky's long-term vision involves regional employers and educators creating rigorous pathways with seamless transitions from secondary settings to postsecondary programs that culminate in valuable industry certifications and credentials recognized by the state and regional workforce. This regional and unified approach is designed to transform secondary education in Kentucky.



The New Skills for Youth Grant funds will be distributed in Kentucky through a competitive grant process. Plans will require the collaboration of multiple school districts and a postsecondary partner.

State partners in the New Skills for Youth Initiative in Kentucky include the Council on Postsecondary Education, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, Cabinet for Economic Development, Labor Cabinet, Chamber of Commerce, Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky

The Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK) youth pre-apprenticeship program continued to grow in 2016. It is a partnership between the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education and the Kentucky Labor Cabinet and is designed to provide secondary students with career pathway opportunities into registered apprenticeship programs.

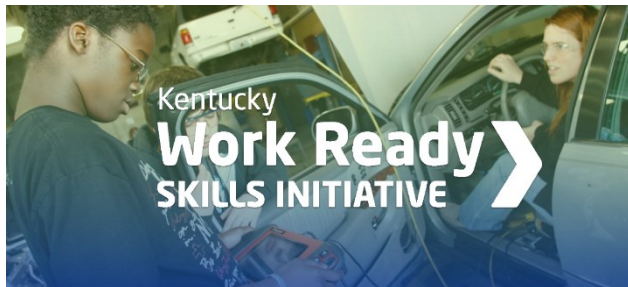


This business and industry-driven program is designed to create a pipeline for students to enter postsecondary apprenticeship training. Employers are able to tailor the program for their specific needs and are able to select the career and technical education courses and students for their apprenticeship pathway. This creates a competitive recruiting environment ensuring that employers benefit by gaining future employees that have a good foundation and an interest in that occupation. Additionally, it enables students to receive a nationally-recognized credential at little or no cost.

Best practice models have proven that upon immediate completion of high school, the student directly transitions into the employer's Registered Apprenticeship Program. At the employer's discretion, students can receive credit for both classroom and on-the-job hours toward the training requirement. There are no costs involved except for the student's wages.

Work Ready Skills Grants

Launched in July 2016, the \$100 million Kentucky Work Ready Skills Initiative is aimed at developing a highly trained, modernized workforce to meet the needs of employers, grow the state's economy and promote sustainable incomes for Kentuckians.



After an extensive application and review process, the Work Ready Skills Advisory Committee awarded more than \$65.5 million to 25 projects – 14 spearheaded by local school districts or area technology centers. The projects include construction and renovation of facilities and the purchase of new equipment aimed at providing workforce training and

education in Kentucky's top five growth sectors of advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics, business services and information technology, healthcare, and construction trades.

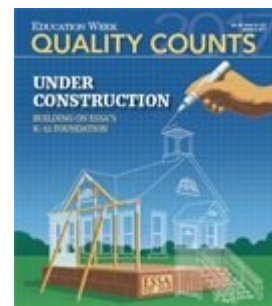


K-12 Public Education Performance

For years, Kentucky ranked near the bottom of states in nearly every indicator of K-12 public education performance. But, that is the case no more. Instead, Kentucky is often cited nationally as an example of improvement for other states and ranks in the top ten on several key indicators.

Quality Counts

For the past 21 years, the national publication *Education Week* has produced a special report called *Quality Counts* that examines a major issue in education and provides state and national comparisons on a number of education indicators.



The report tracks 39 indicators in three areas: chance for success, K-12 achievement and school finance. States earn points based on their performance on the indicators and are assigned grades and a ranking. Kentucky received an overall grade of C, the same as the nation, putting it in 28th place, down from 27th place last year.

	KY	US	KENTUCKY'S RANK NATIONWIDE		
	2017	2017	2015	2016	2017
Chance for Success	C	C+	35	35	34
School Finance	C-	C	26	27	33
K-12 Achievement	C-	C-	19	16	16
Overall Score	C	C	29	27	28

Chance for Success – Rank 34 with Grade C

The Chance for Success index captures the importance of education in a person's lifetime from cradle to career. Its 13 indicators span a variety of factors including preparation in early childhood, the performance of public schools, and educational and economic outcomes in adulthood. Kentucky's scores improved in five of the 13 indicators, remained unchanged in two and lost ground on six indicators.



Between 2016 and 2017, Kentucky improved most dramatically in:

- high school graduation – the percent of public high school students who graduate with a diploma – a gain of 6 points

The state also saw strong gains in:

- steady employment (the percent of adults, ages 2-64 in the labor force working full time and year-round) – a gain of 2.2 points
- parent employment (percent of children with at least one parent working full time and year-round) – a gain of .8

The state realized slight to modest gains in:

- adult educational attainment (percent of adults ages 25-64 with a 2- or 4-year postsecondary degree) – up .4
- annual income (percent of adults, ages 25-64 with incomes at or above the national median – up .3

According to the report, the state saw a decrease in:

- family income (children from families with at least 200 percent of poverty level)
- parent education (children with at least one parent with a postsecondary degree)
- preschool and kindergarten enrollment
- young adult education



School Finance – Rank 33 with a Grade C-

The School Finance category has two subcategories – equity and spending – and presents mixed news for the state. Among the variables taken into account are adjusted per-pupil spending, the relationship between district funding and local property wealth and the percent of taxable resources spent on education. In 2016, Kentucky improved its state ranking on five of the eight indicators and lost ground on three.

With the exception of one indicator, Kentucky scores among the top 15 states in equity of school finance.

In actual spending, the state ranks below the middle on all indicators. **Kentucky's adjusted per-pupil expenditure (PPE) is \$1,596 less than the national average.** However, of greater concern is the fact that **only 1.6 percent of Kentucky students go to school in a district with the PPE at or above the national average.** Nationally, the number is 38.6 percent.

Kentucky's highest ranking indicator on spending is the percent of taxable resources spent on education on which the state ranks 26th.

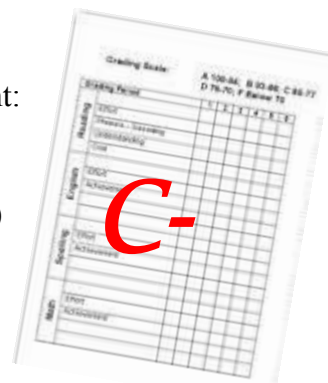
According to the report, these are the areas in which improvement is needed in Kentucky:

- actual spending as a percent of the amount needed to bring all students to the median per pupil expenditure (Equity) - 30th place
- adjusted per pupil expenditures (accounts for regional cost differences) (Spending) – 36th place
- students funded at or above national average (Spending) – 48th place
- per-pupil spending levels weighted by the degree to which districts meet or approach the national average for expenditures (Spending) – 38th place

K-12 Achievement – Rank 16 with a C- (last updated in 2016)

The report awards states points based on six distinct elements of student achievement:

- achievement levels
- achievement gains
- achievement gaps between poor students and those who are not poor (equity)
- advanced performance and improvement in advanced performance
- high school graduation
- performance on advanced placement tests



Kentucky bested the nation on 10 of the 18 indicators seeing its overall ranking improve on half of the 18 indicators for K-12 achievement, no change in three indicators and a loss in ranking on six indicators.

Kentucky's strongest academic showing is based on its improvement over the past decade or so in 4th-grade scale scores in reading (5th in the nation with a 9-point gain) and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and double digit gains in the graduation rate.

The state's biggest challenges are closing the achievement gap and continuing to raise achievement levels in reading and especially math, which is the focus of novice reduction efforts currently underway. In addition, it is expected that as more students build their learning on the foundation of Kentucky's more rigorous standards in these subjects, we will see continuing improvement in achievement levels.

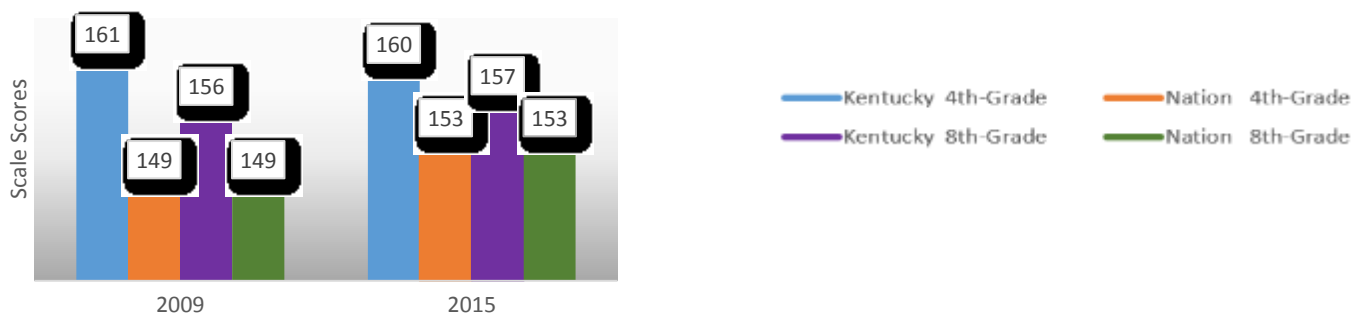
Other Measures of Success

Achievement – Elementary and Middle School

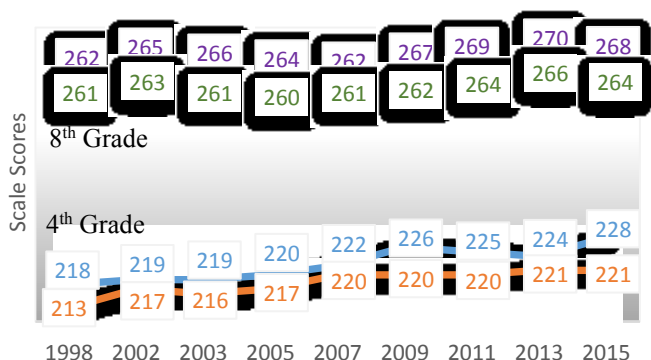
NAEP

Kentucky students outperform their peers at most levels in reading, mathematics, and science on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

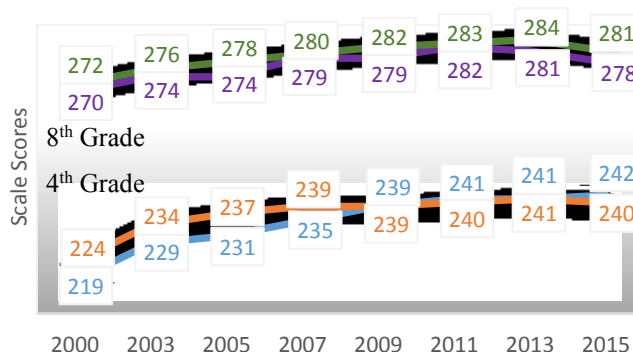
NAEP SCIENCE



NAEP READING



NAEP MATHEMATICS

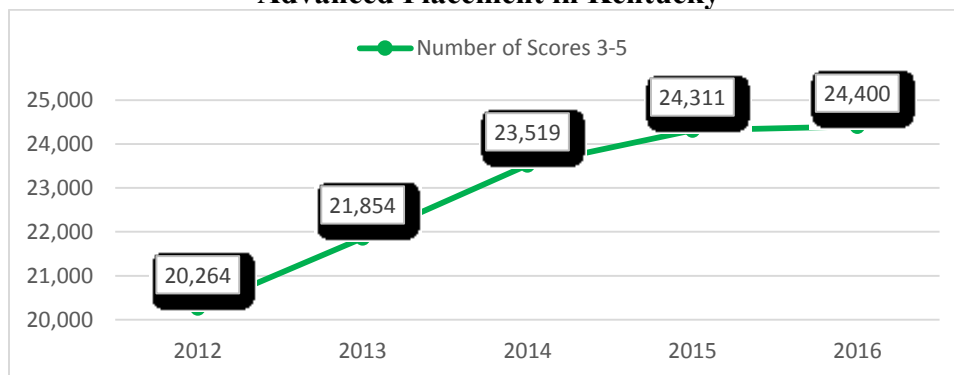


Achievement – High School

Advanced Placement (AP) Tests

In 2016, more Kentucky public high school students scored higher than ever before on rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) tests (see Advanced Placement section of this report). In the past five years the number of tests with a qualifying score of 3, 4 or 5, has increased by 20 percent.

Advanced Placement in Kentucky



Students must earn at least a 3 to earn college credit for the course. Five is the highest score possible.

ACT

Kentucky public high school graduates held steady in meeting the state's college-readiness benchmarks on the ACT college-entrance exam in reading and English, but lost ground in meeting the state mathematics benchmark in 2016.

The state benchmarks represent the minimum scores that guarantee students entry into corresponding credit-bearing college courses at Kentucky colleges and universities without the need for developmental education or supplemental courses.

PERCENTAGES OF KENTUCKY PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATES MEETING COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR COLLEGE READINESS

COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSE	BENCHMARK	2016 GRADUATES MEETING BENCHMARK
English	18	57%
Mathematics	19	41%
Reading	20	50%

Composite scores on the ACT for public school graduates continue to climb from where they were several years ago.

Kentucky Public High School Graduates' Average ACT Scores

	2013	2014	2015	2016
English	18.7	19.0	19.1	19.2
Mathematics	18.9	19.1	19.3	19.1
Reading	19.5	19.9	20.0	20.2
Science	19.4	19.7	19.8	19.6
Composite	19.3	19.5	19.7	19.7
Number taking test	45,052	44,558	45,162	46,285

For a complete look at performance on K-PREP state assessments and End-of-Course Exams for which there is no national comparison, please see the 2015-16 Unbridled Learning Assessment and Accountability Briefing Packet online at <http://bit.ly/UnbridledLearning201516>.



Graduation

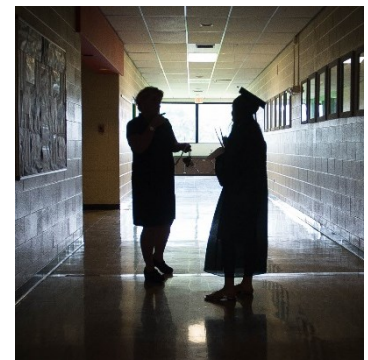
In 2016, **88.6 percent** of Kentucky public students graduated from high school on time, among the highest rates in the nation.

College- and Career-Readiness

In 2015, **68.5 percent** of Kentucky public high school students graduated college- and/or career-ready.

College-ready means students were prepared to take entry-level, credit-bearing, college classes without remediation or additional coursework.

Career-ready students earned an industry-recognized career certificate or a passing score on a Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Assessment, aligned to a Career and Technical Education Career Pathway.



Maximizing Educational Outcomes for All Students

The Kentucky Board of Education has high expectations for all students – from the day they enter kindergarten until the day they walk across the stage to collect a high school diploma. And, the board is dedicated to maximizing students' educational outcomes by increasing readiness and closing opportunity and achievement gaps. This effort does not pertain to only certain children or groups of children, but applies to *all* children. So, KDE is employing a number of strategies to support students and their ability to maximize their educational outcomes.

Chronic Absenteeism

A Kentucky student is labeled chronically absent when he/she misses 10 percent or more of the school year (about 17 days, depending on the district schedule, including both excused and unexcused absences). Currently 15 percent of students in Kentucky are chronically absent.



In 2016, Kentucky formed the Chronic Absenteeism Working Group. In June 2016, the group travelled to Washington, D.C. to learn more about chronic absenteeism research and to begin to develop effective policies and practices that would combat chronic absenteeism in the state. The effort is part of the federal Every Student, Every Day (ESED) initiative launched by the U.S. Departments of Education (USED) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Closing the achievement gap

The achievement gap refers to substantive performance differences between the various groups of students, including:

- male and female students;
- students with and without disabilities;
- students with and without English proficiency;
- minority and nonminority students; and
- students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and those who are not.



Kentucky's goal is 100 percent proficiency for all students.

The distance from that goal or gap is measured by creating a student Gap Group – an overall count of student groups that have historically had achievement gaps.

Percentage of Non-Duplicated Gap Group Students Scoring Proficient/Distinguished On K-PREP

	Year	Reading	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Writing	Language Mechanics
Elementary	2012	37.5	30.3	59.4	48.9	23.1	38.6
	2016	46.9	42.4	n/a	47.9	32.5	42.8
Middle	2012	34.8	28.7	50.1	46.0	30.8	27.6
	2016	44.5	35.5	n/a	48.6	34.7	30.9
High	2012	38.4	27.9	18.5	26.3	31.6	38.6
	2016	44.2	31.5	25.5	47.8	32.4	41.1

Novice Reduction

A key part of KDE's efforts to close the achievement gap relates to novice reduction, or reducing the number of students who score at the lowest "novice" level on state tests.

2015-16 Number of Novice Students

Grade Levels	Reading	Math
Elementary School (3rd-5th)	31,690	25,229
Middle School (6th-8th)	31,473	24,462
High School	16,863 (English II End-of-course)	9,838 (Algebra II End-of-course)
Total	80,026	59,529

This is a moral and ethical imperative since the chances of these students graduating college- or career-ready is reduced, chances of incarceration are increased and chances that these students will need social support services also are increased.

The Novice Reduction work is gaining momentum in schools and districts across Kentucky.



KDE has an established process for how districts and schools can reduce the number of novice students, including:

- an approach to novice reduction and how to conduct a needs assessment of work that impacts novice reduction;
- a process for schools and districts to identify and prioritize their strengths and weaknesses; and
- a tool to assist schools and districts on the novice reduction webpages.

The foundation of the work includes transforming the mindset of district and school leadership to fully examine the current state of the Key Core Work Processes and then implement support structures, effective planning and progress monitoring using 30-60-90-Day Plans.

The novice reduction work focuses on four areas:

- curriculum and standards
- instruction
- continuous improvement and assessment
- environment and support

The department also provides coaches to work with districts and schools to search for ways to improve the novice reduction process and offers training for schools and districts.



Among schools and districts participating in a novice reduction pilot, the percentage of novice students was down overall last year – by more than 3 percent in one level and subject. In contrast, the percentage of novice students in schools and districts that were not involved in the novice reduction pilot, generally did not decrease as much and in some cases grew.

Since September 2015, 8,900 Kentucky educators have received training on novice reduction. More than 43 regional workshops have been held across the state.

Student Supports

The Kentucky Department of Education's primary function is to provide service and assistance to the state's 173 school districts. Among the supports provided are programs that meet students' learning needs as well as basic student needs.



Basic Supports

School and Community Nutrition

The Kentucky Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) leads the nation in percentage growth in the number of meals served, increasing percentage of meals served by 15 percent. While we closed the gap between the number of children eligible for free and reduced-price meals and the number of summer meals served, there are many more children to reach with summer meals. Rural areas present the biggest challenge due to the distance between families and sponsors.

In an effort to meet the challenge, the number of sponsors who provided meals on mobile routes (taking food to where the children are for low-income families who cannot transport children to a site) nearly doubled in 2016.

In the past two years, the Child and Adult Care Food At-Risk Program has nearly doubled in size primarily due to the increased participation of school districts. The at-risk program serves children up to 18 years old in areas where 50 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. At-risk meals may be served after school as a snack and/or supper, on weekends, and as daytime meals when school is out. The at-risk meal program offers enrichment activities such as tutoring, homework assistance, or other educational opportunities along with the meal.

Student Health

There is a critical link between health and learning and the role of schools to help improve the well-being of students, families, and the entire school community. Research shows that when school districts and schools have effective policies and practices that support the health of their students and staff:

- student concentration improves
- student behavior problems are reduced
- student and staff attendance increases
- children and adolescents develop life-long health-promoting behaviors



In 2016, the majority of schools (76 percent) reported via the Practical Living/Career Studies Program Review that they are addressing the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model through the formation of school health committees or wellness policies to improve student wellness outcomes.

More than 1,000 schools serving nearly 550,000 students have joined the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program creating healthier school environments in which children can thrive.

In December 2016, the Kentucky Board of Education adopted a Healthy Schools Program Physical Activity Assessment tool that districts may use to ensure more consistent annual reporting and enable better coordination of training and technical assistance across the state.

Learning Supports



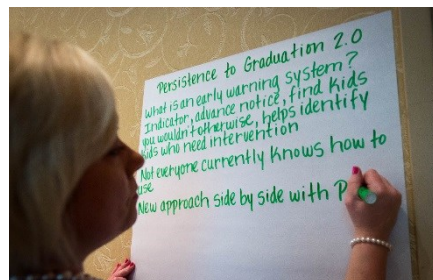
The Kentucky Department of Education has numerous programs to support schools in helping all of the Commonwealth's students stay on track to graduation and a successful future.

In 2016, the department completed the third year of a Mathematics Achievement Fund grant cycle that served 113 schools, providing \$41,000 in intervention funding for primary mathematics. Staff successfully launched a new Request for Applications and awarded new Mathematics Achievement Fund grants to serve at least 91 schools at \$50,000 each.

In 2016, the department completed a grant cycle for Read to Achieve that served 320 schools at \$48,500 each. Staff launched the new Request for Application in the scoring process to determine how many schools, at what funding level, KDE can serve in 2017.

Persistence to Graduation

In 2016, the first annual Persistence to Graduation Summit was held. The convening was designed to support schools, districts, and their community partners in implementation of the new compulsory education law and ways to successfully engage students in education until they earn a high school diploma.



Alternative Education Programs

Alternative education programs exist to meet the needs of students that cannot be addressed in a traditional classroom setting through the assignment of students to alternative classrooms, centers, or campuses that are designed to remediate academic performance, improve behavior or provide an enhanced learning experience.

- In 2016, the Kentucky Department of Education staff worked to improve the process for assessing quality in alternative education programs.
- The department identified seven Alternative Programs of Distinction for 2016 to serve as examples to other alternative education programs in the state.

2016 Alternative Programs of Distinction

School District	Schools
Bullitt County	Bullitt Alternative Center
Covington Independent	Transformational Learning Center
Dayton Independent	Regional School Programs
Fayette County	The Learning Center at Linlee
Jefferson County	Western Day Treatment
Laurel County	The McDaniel Learning Center
McCracken County	McCracken Regional School

Exceptional Children

A significant portion of the students enrolled in a public school in Kentucky qualify as exceptional children and are served through a combination of federal, state and local funds and resources.

In 2016, the United States Department of Education (USED), under section 616 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), determined that Kentucky meets the requirements and purposes of Part B of the IDEA.

In order to support special education statewide, a Directors of Special Education (DoSE) Advisory Group was formed to discuss current issues with members and to gather critical feedback in decision making. This group contains members from each cooperative region of the state. The group has placed emphasis on collaboration and the ideas shared have helped the department make connections with partners much easier.

The department developed a budget and application process for the nine regional educational cooperatives across the state to apply for IDEA funds to operate their special education divisions.

Also in 2016, the commissioner formed a 15-member Autism Work Group that consists of parents, educators, regional education cooperative personnel, postsecondary educators and autism specialists. The task force started work in May, meeting monthly in various regions around the state to hammer out the details of a guidance document on best strategies to address autism in an educational setting. Members anticipate finalizing a web page, guidance document and training modules by the end of June 2017.

The department worked in collaboration with the directors of special education divisions of the regional education cooperatives to develop an annual application that includes budget and scope of work for all regional activities designed to support the needs of students with disabilities.. The special education cooperatives are funded by a significant portion of the state's restricted funds available under the IDEA.



Accountability and School Improvement



Accountability

The Unbridled Learning Assessment and Accountability System provides in-depth information about the performance of students, schools, districts and the state as a whole. The Unbridled Learning accountability model includes annual public reporting of student performance disaggregated by various student groups. The data also gives Kentucky education shareholders the information they need to make decisions on education policies, programs and curricula, and overall school improvement.

Kentucky's current accountability system, the Unbridled Learning College/Career-Readiness Accountability model, was designed under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and provides one system for state and federal accountability. The model supports the Kentucky Board of Education's previous strategic priorities: Next-Generation Learners, Next-Generation Instructional Programs and Support and Next-Generation Professionals, though this component has not yet been included in the actual accountability calculation. (Development of a new strategic plan and priorities is currently underway.)

Various component scores in each area are calculated and weighted to produce an overall score. Based on overall scores, schools and districts fall into one of three performance classifications.

Number of Schools and Districts by Classification				
Revised numbers from original reporting following data clean up				
Schools	Year	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Distinguished
Elementary	2012	508	148	77
	2013	483	172	75
	2014	371	187	162
	2015	328	196	188
	2016	279	163	267
Middle	2012	231	66	36
	2013	210	82	39
	2014	174	86	69
	2015	181	70	76
	2016	144	59	123
High	2012	160	46	24
	2013	86	80	65
	2014	88	81	59
	2015	51	84	93
	2016	36	77	115
Total Schools	2012	899	260	137
	2013	779	334	179
	2014	633	354	290
	2015	560	350	357
	2016	459	2998	505
Districts	2012	121	35	18
	2013	88	61	25
	2014	78	55	40
	2015	53	73	47
	2016	34	60	79

Progressing is an additional designation that is added to a school/district performance classification of distinguished, proficient or needs improvement to indicate that the school has met its annual measurable objective, student participation rate for the all students group and each subgroup, and its graduation rate goal.

Number of Schools and Districts Progressing Revised numbers from original reporting following data clean up				
Schools	Year	Needs Improvement/ Progressing	Proficient/ Progressing	Distinguished/ Progressing
Elementary	2013	212	101	49
	2014	227	147	139
	2015	141	109	123
	2016	75	99	189
Middle	2013	106	42	23
	2014	116	61	60
	2015	56	33	39
	2016	39	310	84
High	2013	32	42	35
	2014	32	43	41
	2015	12	30	40
	2016	23	17	56
Total Schools	2013	350	185	107
	2014	375	251	240
	2015	209	172	202
	2016	116	147	329
Districts	2013	33	26	4
	2014	32	27	25
	2015	11	16	11
	2016	1	17	37

Schools and districts are placed in rewards or assistance categories based on overall scores and other data.

- **School/District of Distinction**

- meets its current year AMO, student participation rate and graduation rate goal
- has a graduation rate above 80 percent for the prior two years
- scores at the School of Distinction cut score or higher on the overall score
- for a district – does not have a school categorized as a Focus School or Priority School

- **High-Performing School/District**

- meets its current year AMO, student participation rate and graduation rate goal
- has a graduation rate above 80 percent for the prior two years
- scores above the High-Performing cut score on the overall score
- for a district – does not have any schools categorized as Focus Schools or Priority Schools

- **High-Progress School/District**

A Title I or Non-Title I school that:

- meets its current year AMO, student participation rate and graduation goal
- has a graduation rate above 80 percent for the prior two years
- has an improvement score indicating the school is in the top 10 percent of improvement of all non-Title I elementary, middle or high schools as determined by the difference in the two most recent calculations of the overall score

A district that:

- meets its current year AMO, student participation rate and graduation goal
- has a graduation rate above 80 percent for the prior two years
- has an improvement score indicating the district is in the top 10 percent of improvement of all districts as determined by the difference in the two most recent calculations of the overall score

School/district **assistance categories** are:

- **Priority School –**
 - has an overall score in the bottom five percent of overall scores by level for all schools that failed to meet the AMO for three consecutive years
 - has a graduation rate that has been below 80 percent for three or more consecutive years
- **Focus School**
 - has a non-duplicated student gap group score in the bottom 10 percent of non-duplicated student gap group scores for all elementary, middle and high schools
 - has an individual student subgroup within assessment grades by level with a score in the bottom 5 percent
 - has a graduation rate that has been less than 80 percent for two consecutive years
- **Focus District**
 - has a non-duplicated student gap group score in the bottom 10 percent of non-duplicated student gap group scores for all districts. Focus Districts are identified annually based on data.

Number of Schools and Districts by Rewards and Assistance Categories						
Revised numbers from original reporting following data clean up						
		Rewards Categories	Assistance Categories			
Schools	Year	School of Distinction	High-Performing School	High-Progress School	Priority Schools	Focus Schools
Elementary	2012	37	40	n/a	0	103
	2013	30	19	76	0	102
	2014	69	70	73	0	98
	2015	75	44	71	2	101
	2016	144	42	73	2	84
Middle	2012	18	16	n/a	9	106
	2013	9	13	34	9	105
	2014	39	15	35	9	103
	2015	24	14	34	10	106
	2016	59	11	34	9	99
High	2012	11	8	n/a	32	76
	2013	11	14	25	32	75
	2014	19	14	23	27	73
	2015	26	8	23	16	75
	2016	31	14	19	16	59
Total Schools	2012	62	68	n/a	41	285
	2013	49	47	131	41	282
	2014	127	99	131	36	274
	2015	125	66	128	28	282
	2016	234	67	126	27	242

		District of Distinction	High-Performing District	High-Progress District	Priority District	Focus District
Districts	2012	6	8	n/a	n/a	17
	2013	0	3	17	n/a	17
	2014	7	8	17	n/a	17
	2015	5	2	22	0	17
	2016	16	7	10	0	13

School Improvement

Continuous Support and Improvement

While Kentucky public education has made great strides in recent years, schools and districts continue to work to improve student achievement.

Through a system of continuous improvement, schools and districts are constantly learning, reflecting, monitoring and evaluating for success. Schools use 30-60-90-Day Plans to pursue goals that are aligned to their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan or Comprehensive District Improvement Plan. Outcomes are measured by data for each initiative.



In order to disseminate practices that motivate, engage and provide measurable results in the classroom across the state, the Kentucky Department of Education hosts a Best Practices website that allows teachers and administrators access to strategies that have been proven successful. The searchable database allows educators to zero in on their specific need or browse the practices that have been proven to improve student performance.

In 2016, the 4th Annual Continuous Improvement Summit was held to promote Continuous Improvement and Gap Closure.

School Turnaround

For schools that need extra help, the department offers a vast array of supports.

Education Recovery staff work with school staff to build capacity and help turn around the school in many ways including ensuring rigorous and authentic assessments to inform and improve instruction, helping staff work with families and the community to remove barriers to learning, and working with teachers to identify areas of growth that will enhance their teaching skills.

Three schools are now identified as Hub Schools, which serve as models for school turnaround and best practices in teaching and learning. Those schools are: Franklin-Simpson High School, Pulaski County High School and East Carter High School.

During the 2015-16 school year, nearly 1,470 people from 170 schools and 124 districts visited the Hub Schools.



Mass Insight Education, a national nonprofit that focuses on school reform, recently performed a diagnostic review of Kentucky's work on school improvement and turnaround to gauge the state's effectiveness and ability to drive and support school improvement and turnaround efforts statewide. The study focused on seven core components of a comprehensive state-level strategy, structure, and process.

In a November 2016 letter, President and CEO of Mass Insight Education, Dr. Susan Lusi wrote:

“As a national leader on school turnaround, we have studied turnaround models from states across the country. We have seen what’s working and making a difference for students in low-performing schools as we work with multiple state and district partners to advance turnaround policy and practice. After our review of Kentucky’s program, we believe that it is one of the strongest turnaround models in the nation. The commitment to continuous improvement that permeates the department and the field has created a culture of excellence that aligns with our own vision of best practices. We believe that turnaround needs to be dramatic and sustained. The Kentucky model demonstrates how a state can accomplish this and improve outcomes for students.”

“After our review of Kentucky’s program, we believe that it is one of the strongest turnaround models in the nation.”

*Dr. Susan Lusi
President and CEO
Mass Insight Education*

Of the low-performing schools that have received state support and exited priority status in Kentucky, 74 percent are performing at a proficient level or above.

The report recommends the state establish a strategic talent pipeline to recruit teachers, particularly for the lowest performing schools (*see Effective Teachers and Leaders section on page 27*); redouble efforts to involve parents in school turnaround; and expand the Hub School Program.

State-assisted and -managed districts

When local school districts demonstrate an inability to execute their responsibilities or properly govern themselves, it can become necessary for KDE to provide assistance or even take full control of operations in a district. When a district that demonstrates such a critical lack of efficiency or effectiveness in governance or administration that state-mandated corrective action or state control of the district is required, the district is designated for state assistance or management.

When a district is placed under state assistance, KDE provides management assistance to the district to develop and implement a plan to correct deficiencies. Under state management, KDE has full control of all administrative, operational, financial, personnel and instructional management duties typically carried out by the local school board and superintendent. The state maintains control until the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) determines that the patterns of ineffective and inefficient governance and the deficiencies have been corrected.

The commissioner’s recommendation to the KBE that a district be designated for state assistance or management is based on a management audit that includes an investigation of the district’s compliance with state and federal statutes, administrative regulations and local board policies.

There are five districts currently under state assistance or management, and progress has been made in each of them since those designations were put in place by the KBE.



Districts that are currently under state assistance made progress in 2016:

- Robertson County School District has moved from last (173) to 7th in the state and is now a Distinguished District. The district is financially stable for the first time in years.
- Fleming County Schools have made significant progress academically. In 2012-2013 they were a Needs Improvement/Focus District. Today they are a Distinguished District and financially stable with a real possibility of having a \$1 million ending fund balance.
- The Caverna Independent School District has made great strides in improving facilities to ensure that students and teachers have a clean and safe school environment. There is an intentional focus on instruction that is being led from the district office.

Those districts currently under state management also reported progress in the past year:

- Breathitt County Schools had its very first Distinguished School (Highland Turner Elementary). Culture, Communication and Trust continue to improve. KDE is now seen as a true and valuable partner by the majority of shareholders. In the past, the relationship has been more tumultuous and adversarial.
- Menifee County Schools passed the nickel tax that will allow the district to move forward with building a new school.



District Finance and Operations

Funding

Kentucky's 173 public schools are funded through a mix of local, state and federal tax dollars and outside grant money.



Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK)

Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) is the basic state funding formula used to allocate state dollars to school districts.

Despite talk of budget reductions as high as 9 percent, with the passage of HB 303 in the 2016 session, the level of SEEK funding was held at the same per pupil rate of \$3,981 as in the last budget cycle. Total funding for SEEK was set at \$3,035,747,400 in 2016-17, and \$3,024,776,100 in 2017-18. In fiscal year 2016, SEEK experienced a shortfall of approximately \$4.6 million, but the Governor agreed to cover the shortfall which resulted in a payment to districts in October 2016.

Although the budget has maintained a level amount of SEEK funding, districts have experienced shortfalls in their financial operations. This is because expenses such as salaries, benefits, facilities maintenance, and transportation continue to rise. Districts also are under pressure on the local front to maintain or reduce taxes on their citizenship and have struggled to make up for funding shortfalls using local levies, including recallable nickels.

Compounding this is the dramatic drop in unmined minerals assessments from the prior year, which will have significant impact in many, if not all, of the coal producing counties. In December, the Kentucky Department of Revenue estimated the loss in tax revenue to be at least \$4,359,700 in the 12 school districts for whom the impact would be the greatest. For those districts, the amounts ranged from approximately \$114,800 to \$1,018,600. This will likely lead to significant financial hardship in the worst hit districts.

Contract Review

In 2016, KDE implemented a comprehensive contract review to strengthen required milestones and deliverables in contracts with educational partners to ensure a high level of fiduciary responsibility.

District Audits

KDE received audits from all 173 school districts covering the 2015-16 fiscal year. KDE internally reviewed each report as well as had the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) review them. KDE found no district in violation of material/significant waste, fraud, or abuse.

Facilities

With funds provided in HB 303 (2016), the Executive Branch Budget Bill, KDE initiated the Kentucky Facilities Inventory Classification System (KFICS) project with the development of a Request for Proposals (RFP) from vendors.

Additionally, in 2016, the department started development of Facilities Planning and Construction project forms and work flow processes with implementation planned for late spring 2017.



Transportation

Transportation is an integral part of the total school program. KDE provides support for school districts from training bus driver trainers to the purchase of school buses. Safety is a key focus. Every day 9,855 school buses transport over 385,000 students.

In 2016, KDE created an outdoor billboard advertising campaign to promote school bus safety. A total of 45 billboards promoting school bus safety awareness were put up. More than 2,325,879 adults viewed the billboards each week – totaling more than 9,303,516 views in six weeks. This prompted national interest from national bus safety advocates as to how Kentucky achieved its partnership and whether similar campaigns could be replicated in other states.



Also, KDE created a training manual for new School Bus Drivers and conducted 5 New Driver Trainer Classes, certifying 72 new Driver Trainers. Challenges continue in local school districts to attract and retain bus drivers.



State Schools

State Schools

The state runs 53 Area Technology Centers as well as two schools to address the special needs of visually-impaired and deaf learners. The Kentucky Board of Education also serves as the board for the Kentucky School for the Blind and Kentucky School for the Deaf, and KDE staff serve as resources for all of the state schools.

Area Technology Centers

The state operates 53 Area Technology Centers (ATCs) across Kentucky that provide planned course sequences of high-quality academic content and technical skills, focus on a specific career and prepare students to successfully transition toward their career goal. The funding mechanisms are distinctly different for the 53 state-operated ATCs than for the 42 locally-operated Area Technology Centers and local schools, making comparisons difficult. The Area Technology Centers are funded utilizing a combination of federal Perkins money and state SEEK and General Fund dollars. State-operated ATCs receive no foundational SEEK dollars but do receive special funding for personnel and a portion of



operating expenses through a separate SEEK allocation. ATCs apply to the state for these funds and allocations are made based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled in 3-hour (half-day) courses at the center divided into the total state amount available in that year. (See program information under the Career and Technical Education section of this report on page 30).



Kentucky School for the Blind

The Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) provides comprehensive educational services to all Kentucky students who are blind and visually-impaired, birth to 21. In addition to the residential and day student programs located in Louisville, KSB supports local school districts in reducing barriers for students who are blind or visually-impaired through its outreach program.

Also in 2016:

- Seven students from KSB worked with the Louisville Story Program to author and publish a “groundbreaking anthology of memoirs and oral histories”. The book, “We Can Hear You Just Fine” was launched in December.
- Two students from KSB were inducted into the National Honor Society.
- The radio station will be running again next year, but through a podcast. This will help increase the career and technical education programs (podcasting can lead to marketing strategies, home business, etc.). A student received an award from ATT for \$5,000 to fund the station. The student provides customer service for ATT and he is only 16.



- The 2016 White Cane Award was presented to Mason Buckingham of Paducah. This award recognizes a student with a visual impairment that contributes to his community. Mason was the first recipient. He is a junior at McCracken County High School who volunteers regularly at the Community Kitchen and Hope Unlimited. In 2016 he attended the INSIGHT College Preparation Program at Morehead State University, worked for a local employer in the Office for the Blind's (OFB's) summer work program, and participated in all of KSB/OFB's iTeam student events.

Kentucky School for the Deaf

The Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) ensures that Kentucky students who are deaf or hard of hearing children and youth in Kentucky have educational opportunities to develop their potential to become educated, life-long learners and productive citizens. In partnership with families, local school districts, and other service providers, KSD functions as a statewide educational center.

KSD provides several programs for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. These include an instructional program for students from kindergarten through the 12th grade, a residential student life program at its campus in Danville, and an outreach program.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) at the school is strong and includes programs in Informatics, Culinary Arts, Manufacturing Engineering, Horticulture and Small Animal Science. KSD shares their CTE program with the local high school.



The Kentucky Department of Education

The Kentucky Department of Education is a service agency of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The department provides resources and guidance to Kentucky's public schools and districts as it implements the state's P-12 education requirements. The department also serves as the state liaison for federal education requirements and funding opportunities.

The department's major activities include:

- administering the statewide assessment and accountability system;
- providing technical assistance to schools and districts in the areas of finance, management and curriculum;
- operating state schools;
- providing support and information to the Kentucky Board of Education as it promulgates state education regulations;
- overseeing the state's education technology system; and
- monitoring school and district compliance with state and federal laws.

The department is organized into seven program area offices and the Office of the Commissioner. Work is led by the commissioner and planning committee. The work of the department is integrated across offices and is seldom confined to just one office.

KDE Move

In 2016, the department moved from the Capital Plaza Tower on Mero Street to the new 300 Building located at 300 Sower Blvd. in Frankfort. The newly constructed building was made possible through a public/private partnership and houses 1,457 state employees including those in the Energy and Environment Cabinet and Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. The building is LEED certified for energy efficiency and features designs to reduce utility costs by 20-25 percent with natural lighting, LED fixtures, low-flow plumbing and a hot water recirculation system.



The Division of School and Community Nutrition will be moving from the Capital Plaza Tower to a different building at Hudson Hollow once renovations are complete in spring 2017.

KDE at the State Fair

Kentuckians attending the 2016 Kentucky State Fair in Louisville Aug. 18-28 were able to visit with Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff at the agency's booth in the Main Street Kentucky section of the South Wing of the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville. KDE featured different subject content theme days including mathematics, science, arts and humanities, social studies, global competency/world languages, library media, early childhood learners, and English/language arts, along with days spotlighting the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville and the Kentucky School for the Blind in Louisville. KDE staff engaged visitors and answered questions.





The KDE Office of Career and Technical Education also was on hand each day with staff available to answer questions related to career and technical education.

Buster the School Bus, a remote control miniature bus that can talk, also made several appearances throughout the course of the fair to teach young children about school bus safety.

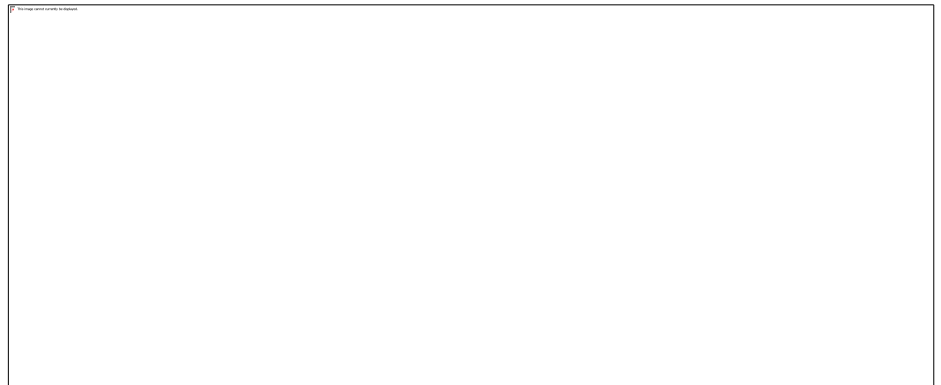
Employment

Excluding the Office of Career and Technical Education, at the end of 2016, the department employed 538 full-time employees (about 12 percent minorities), of which 345 make up the Frankfort-based full-time workforce.

The Office of Career and Technical Education employs 607 full-time employees (about 2 percent minorities), which includes Frankfort-based staff as well as those employed in the 53 Area Technology Centers. Due to factors such as geographic location, demographics and position requirements, recruitment of minority staffing is difficult, though minority recruitment efforts are ongoing.

KDE Charitable Giving

KDE staff are charitable givers. In 2017, department employees raised \$30,132.72 for the Employees Charitable Campaign. A drive to benefit the Toys for Tots campaign resulted in the collection and distribution of more than 600 toys to needy children in central Kentucky.



Customer Service

According to the 2016 customer service survey, 88 percent of customer contacts with the department are handled in a professional manner with the majority of requests coming from district and school personnel via email.

Appendix A: Spotlight on Kentucky

- ❖ 9th in 4th grade reading (2015, [NAEP](#))
- ❖ 9th in 4th grade science (2015, [NAEP](#))
- ❖ 8th in high school graduation rate (4 year ACGR; 2013-14, [Common Core of Data](#))
 - 4th highest rate among economically disadvantaged
 - 9th highest rate among Blacks
 - 5th highest rate among Hispanics
- ❖ 18th in 8th grade science (2015, [NAEP](#))
- ❖ 20th in 8th grade reading (2015, [NAEP](#))
- ❖ 22nd in 4th grade mathematics (2015, [NAEP](#))
- ❖ 10th in the percentage increase (9 percent) of graduates scoring of 3 or better on an AP exam since 2006 (College Board, 2016)

Despite Being Ranked

- ❖ 12th highest in the percentage of teachers with less than 2 years of teaching experience (2011-12 [Digest of Education Statistics](#))
- ❖ 14th highest in pupil/teacher ratio (Fall 2013, [Digest of Education Statistics](#))
- ❖ 14th highest in percentage of students who qualify for free/reduced-price lunch (2013-14, [Digest of Education Statistics](#))
- ❖ 39th in per pupil elementary and secondary education funding ([U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Annual Survey of School System Finances](#))
 - KY: \$10,523 | US \$12,774
- ❖ 39th in per pupil elementary and secondary spending on instruction ([U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Annual Survey of School System Finances](#))
 - KY: \$5,328 | US: \$6,654
- ❖ 41st in the percentage of 3, 4 year olds enrolled in school (2014, [Digest of Education Statistics](#))

Appendix B: Kentucky Education Facts

Number of school districts: 173

(Does not include dependent districts Fort Campbell and Fort Knox, alternative programs or the Kentucky School for the Deaf and Kentucky School for the Blind)

Superintendents: 34 female; 139 male; 4 minority

Number of public schools: 1,253

Preschool – 12

Elementary (preschool-6th grade) – 696

Elementary/middle (any combination of P-6 and 6-8) – 84

Middle (6-8) – 225

Middle/high (any combination of 6-8 and 9-12) – 20

High (9-12) – 203

P-12 (any combination of P-6 and 6-8 and 9-12) – 12

These figures include only schools classified as A1 that serve the general population and do not include special or alternative programs or state-run schools). Five districts do not have high schools. They are: Anchorage Independent, East Bernstadt Independent, Science Hill Independent, Southgate Independent and West Point Independent.

Career and technical schools

Locally-operated – 42

State-operated – 53

Number of public school teachers: 42,040

White – 95%

Minority – 4%

Male – 22%

Female – 78%

Number of public school students: 655,475

White – 79%

African American – 10.5%

Hispanic – 6%

Asian – 1.6%

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander – less than 1%

Native American – less than 1%

Other – 3.3%

Length of school year: 185 days

(includes 170 days of instruction; four days of professional development; four holidays; two planning days)

Number of employed certified staff: 8,788

Average teacher salary: \$52,618

Average years teaching experience: 11 years, 8 months

Teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: 3,273

(7.8% of the total teaching force)

Kentucky's rank in the number of new nationally certified teachers: 6th nationwide

Number of teacher interns: 2,323

Number of principal interns: 0

(Program was not funded in the current biennium.)

Total number who hold Kentucky-issued certifications (as of Jan. 30, 2017): 161,500 (excludes conditional, adjunct, emergency and temporary certificates, as well as statements of eligibility)

Number of classified staff (actual head count): 46,657

Average per-pupil current expense spending (excludes debt service, facilities and fund transfers): \$10,192

Total SEEK budget: \$3.0 billion FY17

Total P-12 state education budget: \$5.02 billion FY17 (Includes general, federal and restricted fund sources)

Total P-12 federal education revenue: \$888 million FY17

Total P-12 local education revenue: \$2.5 billion FY16

Number of local school board seats: 867

(172 districts have five-member boards; Jefferson County has a seven member board.)

Gender breakdown of local school board members

Male – 391

Female – 389

142 either did not indicate gender or were elected/appointed since last demographic survey

Racial breakdown of local school board members

White – 667

Non-White – 37

163 did not disclose or were elected/appointed since last demographic survey

Number of schools served by councils: 1,107

(41 exemptions – 27 because of accountability status; 14 in one-school districts)

NOTE: 703 KAR 5:040 mandates that schools classified as "A1" schools are eligible for School Based Decision Making Councils (SBDMs). A1 schools do not include preschools, alternative schools, career and technical or special education schools.

Number of alternative SBDM models: 19

Parents serving on SBDM councils: 5,189

Number of volunteer hours: 2,783,027

State dropout rate: 1.5 %

State retention rate: 1.9 %

State attendance rate: 94.5 %

State graduation rate: 89.5 % 5-year adjusted cohort rate

Successful Transition Rate: 93.2%

(Percentage of high school graduates attending college, career/technical schools, entering the military, employed or a combination of the above)

Pre-kindergarten (preschool) children enrolled in state-funded programs: 19,183
(includes children who meet eligibility criteria and children served through district funds or tuition)

Number of students enrolled in Kentucky Head Start programs: 13,095
(based on Dec. 1 Count – all 3 and 4 year olds)

Pre-kindergarten state budget: \$90.1 million (FY 2016)

Types of kindergarten programs offered by school districts

Full day – 74

Half day – 87

Both – 12

Percent of individuals eligible for free or reduced-price meals in public schools: 70.57%
(as of January 2017 – includes K-12 students; preschool/Head Start students; some adults who qualify through the National School Lunch Program)

Number of exceptional children ages 3-5: 17,519 (as of December 2016)

Number of exceptional children ages 6-21: 83,787 (as of December 2015)

Number of students qualifying for Gifted & Talented services: 110,176
(as of November 2016)

Primary Talent Pool (K-3): 21,612

Formal ID (4-12): 88,564

Gifted & Talented state budget: \$6.6 million FY 2017)

Students taking Advanced Placement (AP) exams: 31,463 (2015-16)

AP exams given: 49,865 (2015-16)

Number of AP exams with scores of 3 or higher: 24,777 (almost 50%)

Number of public schools operating federal Title I programs: 926

Number of public schools operating schoolwide Title I programs: 913
(those that serve all students in a school)

Number of Title I targeted assistance programs: 13

Title I, Part A funding: \$2.374 million (FY 2016)

Title III funding for immigrant services: \$141,896

Districts receiving Title III immigrant funding: 6

Students receiving Title III-funded immigrant services: 4,910

Districts receiving Title III EL funding: 70

Students receiving Title III-funded EL services: 21,441

Title III funding for English learners (EL) services: \$3.2 million

State funding for EL students: \$8 million

Number of students qualifying for state-funded EL services: 21,385

Languages, other than English, spoken at home by EL students: 139
(2014-15 data from June 1, 2015)

- Spanish (62%)
- Arabic (5%)
- Somali (3%)
- Nepali (2%)
- Japanese (2%)
- Swahili (2%)
- Karen (2%)
- Mai Mai (1%)
- Bosnian (1%)
- Chinese, Mandarin (1%)
- Others (approximately 18%)

Students to modern high-performance computers ratio: 1.4-to-1
(as of June 2016)

Percentage of networked schools with high-speed fiber internet access, email and direct dial-in/out telephone access: 100%

(all 173 district offices have access to high-speed fiber internet services – a minimum of 100 Kbps of bandwidth available per student)

Students with internet access at home: 88%
(94% of those students report having wireless access at home)

Amount of federal e-Rate funding available to Kentucky school districts for technology and statewide fiber internet services: \$40.5 million (FY 2016)

Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) participation: 92% of schools
More than 8,000 students from 399 schools and 99 districts participated in the annual STLP State Championship.

Imagine Academy student professional certifications for technology-related areas: 91% of high schools and area technology centers participate.

- Professional career-ready certifications earned in the 2015-16 school year: 8,300
- Online technology-related courses completed: 28,951

Kentucky Instructional Management System (IMS) and Educator Development Suite (EDS) participation: 1.6 million average logins per month
IMS:

- 29,132 unique teacher and 2,535 unique administrators use IMS during average 60-day period
- 219,000 students used IMS for student portfolios and common and formative assessments
- 23,000 students on average log in to the system each week.

EDS:

- 304,000 formative assessments
- 646,000 lesson plans created
- 92,000 electronic instructional resources aligned to the Kentucky Academic Standards

Digital Citizenship Program participation: 91% of districts
(Students learn the nine fundamental elements of safe and responsible use with online or digital tools.)

Districts offering online or blended courses: 86%

Students accessing the technology-enabled Individual Learning Plan (ILP): 91% of students in grades 6-12
(more than 260,000 accounts)

Number of family resource/youth services centers (FRYSCs): 816
(423 family resource; 267 youth services; 129 combined)

Number of schools served by FRYSCs: 1,175

Number of students served by FRYSCs: 620,029

Number of students served in extended school services (ESS) programs during the school year: 161,257
(not including summer programs)

Funds allocated for ESS programs: \$24.6 million

Number of Community Education directors: 94

Number of school districts served by Community Education programs: 134

Number of school buses: 9,855

Number of licensed school bus drivers: 10,240



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